Encounter

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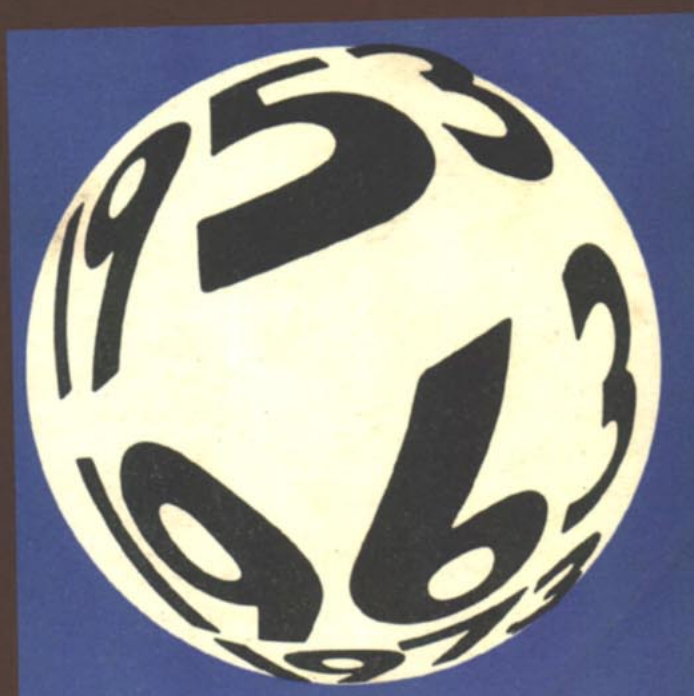

ON INTELLECTUAL REVIEWS

D.W.Brogan

edited by
Stephen Spender
and
Melvin J. Lasky

tenth year

November 1963
monthly 4s 122

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Encounter

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* MELVIN J. LASKY

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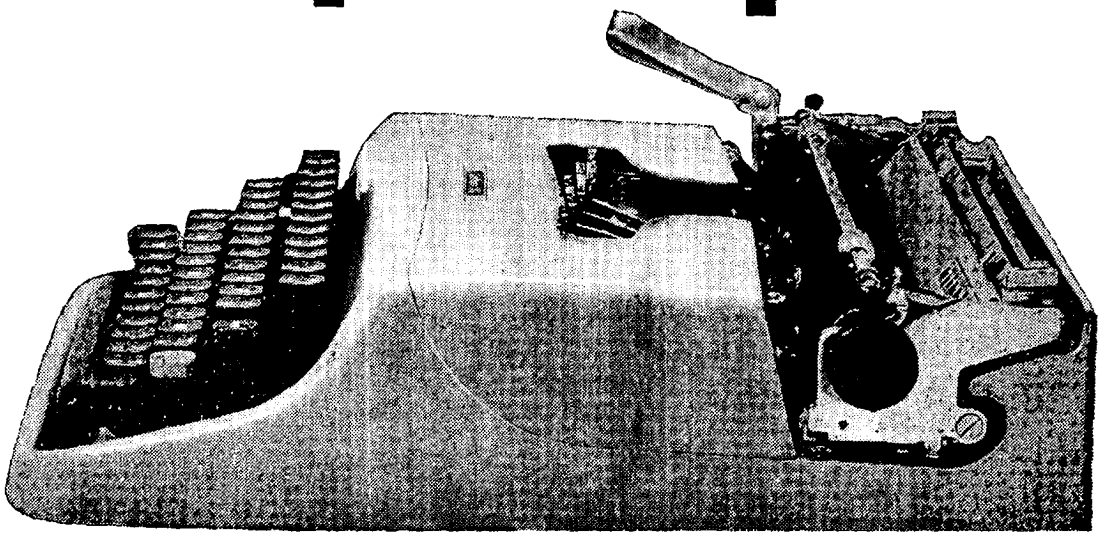

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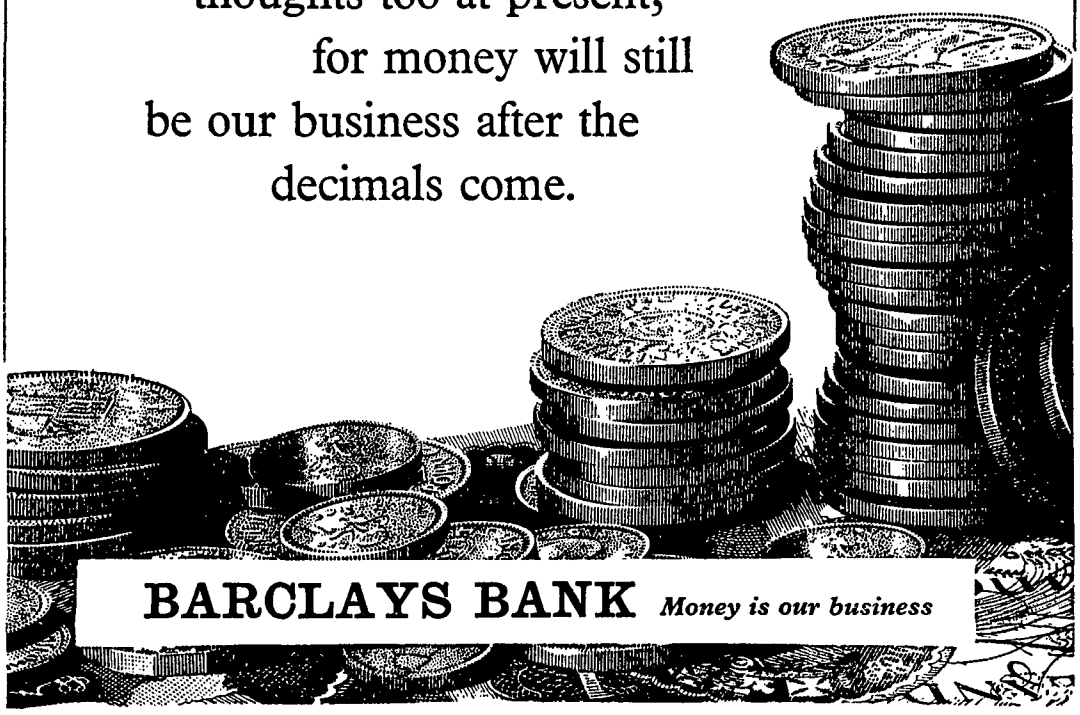

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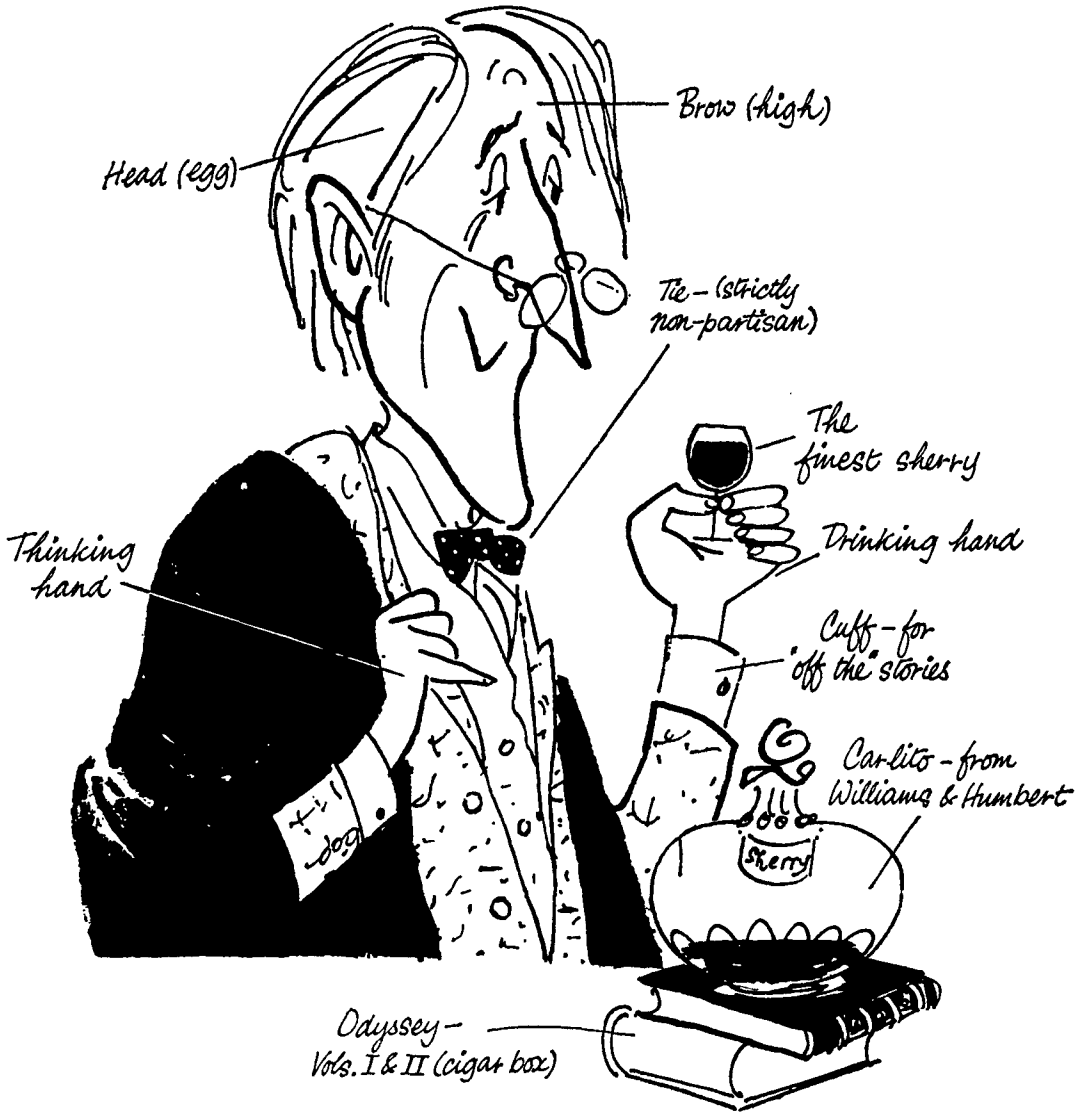

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D. W. Brogan

The Intellectual Review

WHEN A JOURNAL, magazine or review like ENCOUNTER anthologises itself, it always forces an historical consideration of the kind of periodical it is and of the history of what, in neutral terms, can be called periodicals of opinion. They have played a great part in the intellectual history of Europe for nearly two hundred years. They have been instruments of propaganda, instruments of effective political action, carriers of "culture," arenas in which celebrated and often competent controversialists have performed. To belong, as ENCOUNTER undoubtedly does, to the class of periodicals which we associate with such great names as those of the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, to name only some of the most celebrated, is no doubt an honour, but it is also a great responsibility. It means that ENCOUNTER commits itself to providing both a platform for contributors of various types, and views, and it commits itself to the advocacy of a basic view that literary, political, social controversy is in itself a good thing.

This is not to say that ENCOUNTER or its ancestors are free from bias. (To be in favour of open controversy in this modern world is itself to have a bias.) But the great ancestors of ENCOUNTER have not only had this bias, but they have had a bias of a different type. They have been in favour of some general views of human life and society. They have been in favour of the right of people who did not share this view to express their opposition. But they have not been in favour of a neutrality which is content to provide an open forum in which all the winds of doctrine can blow and in which it is either assumed that truth will always be victorious in such a forum; or that it does not matter whether truth is victorious or perhaps whether there is anything that can safely be called truth. All the great journals of this type have been controversial, not in the sense that they have regularly denied the right of reply to opponents, but that they have regarded certain political parties and social theories as being parties and theories opposed to their own bias.

It is for this reason that the great reviews could hardly exist before the acceptance of the "freedom of the press," the acceptance of the idea that an opposition was a legitimate part of the body politic. True, not all great reviews have been journals of opposition, but it is not accidental that the great reviews at their greatest have been highly critical of established orthodoxies. At the risk of appearing excessively dogmatic and perhaps revealing too much local Caledonian patriotism, I am willing to assert that the first great modern review of the type to which ENCOUNTER belongs was the *Edinburgh Review*, founded in the "modern Athens" in 1802.

THERE HAD BEEN, of course, important and influential magazines before 1802. There had been learned journals like the Jesuit *Journal de Trevoux*. Bayle, in his Dutch exile, had regularly undermined both the Catholic and Protestant establishments in France and prepared the way for that long campaign of polemical criticism which we associate in the next century with the French Enlightenment. But even in the comparatively free politics of England and the Dutch Republic, not to speak of such minor

FOR *the tenth anniversary anthology of* ENCOUNTER, *we asked Sir Denis Brogan, the noted historian and Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, to discuss the role of intellectual reviews in general. This article is based on his introduction to the volume entitled* ENCOUNTERS, *which is to be published in London this month by Weidenfeld & Nicolson and in New York by Basic Books.*

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pockets of liberalism as the bishopric of Liège, a truly critical review, in the 19th-century sense, was impossible. It was, of course, possible to publish both in England and in the Netherlands highly critical accounts of affairs in France. It is not accidental that so many of the great revolutionary polemical works of the French 18th-century have a Dutch imprint. (This sometimes conceals the fact that they were in fact printed in France. By the standards of modern tyrannies in Italy, Germany, and Soviet Russia, the censorship of the French monarch was remarkably lax.) Nevertheless, there was censorship. And if the French monarchy was not protected by the laws of England or the Netherlands, the life of a journalist or polemical writer in these countries, if he involved himself in criticism of the established English or Dutch order, was hazardous. John Wilkes was only the most notorious martyr to the freedom of the press in 18th-century England. True, that eminently respectable periodical, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, could report on the proceedings in Parliament under the transparent disguises of "The Parliament of Lilliput" and that zealous and acrimonious Tory, Samuel Johnson, might see that the Whig dogs got the worst of it. But the great polemical instrument of the 18th-century was not the periodical but the pamphlet. (Pamphlets, of course, were not necessarily brief dogmatic statements of a few pages, but might be as long as many modern books.) It was the pamphlet that Swift and Voltaire used to make their point, and, of course fiction, as in *Gulliver's Travels* and *Candide*. The fictitious outside view as in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* or, in a much milder form, in Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* were also weapons in the war of the Enlightenment. And across the Atlantic, in the remote and civilised city of Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin in *Poor Richard's Almanac* and in a great many apologues undermined the Quaker establishment and preached his own doctrine of tolerant commonsense, the view of life of "*l'homme moyen sensuel.*" Indeed, it might be argued that the *Encyclopédie*, for all its legitimate claims to being a work of learning and science, was an immense pamphlet whose toleration by Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour again reminds us of how little the *ancien régime* knew of effective repression of dangerous thoughts.

BUT IT IS NOT accidental that the review in its modern sense should have found its birthplace in Britain, and, to be more specific, in Scotland. In 1802, when a group of impecunious young men (two of the most important among them, Sydney Smith and Brougham, Englishmen) founded the *Edinburgh Review*, they were, in a sense, carrying on the work of what has since been called "The Scottish Enquiry." The Edinburgh of David Hume and Principal Robertson, the Glasgow of Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith, had created a climate of opinion in North Britain that made the idea of launching a quarterly magazine of opinion less hazardous than it would have been in London. As Francis Jeffrey, the first and greatest editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, realised, there were advantages as well as disadvantages in being so far from London. The original team of the *Edinburgh Review* were amateurs, lawyers or parsons, and were free, or so they hoped, from the merely literary bias and the merely literary feuds of London. And that the climate of opinion in Edinburgh was (unlike the physical climate) favourable to new and tender literary shoots was to be shown by the success of *Blackwood's* which, if never a world force as the *Edinburgh Review* was, was yet an important patron of talent if not quite of genius.

THE *Edinburgh Review* set many of the precedents for later imitators and descendants. It is astonishing and almost comic to-day, to realise that the founders didn't expect to be paid and didn't think that they should be paid. Fortunately, the rapid commercial success of the Review both provided the money for the payment of contributors and broke down their scruples. Periodical writing, it was soon discovered, was not disgraceful, not ill-paid, not one of the numerous and shady by-ways of Grubb Street. If we reflect that of the original founders of the *Edinburgh Review* one became Lord Chancellor and the discoverer of Cannes (Brougham); another became Lord Advocate and a Senator of the College of Justice (Jeffrey); another, Francis Horner, became, for reasons that now escape us, an important politician; and the fourth, Sydney Smith, even worse treated by his Whig patrons than Swift was by his Tory patrons, yet became a canon of St. Paul's, we can see that the *Edinburgh Review* was a very different kind of periodical from those that had employed the young Sam Johnson or even the kind that gave a living, if not a lavish one, to people like Hazlitt in London. The *Edinburgh Review* was a force.

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WHAT KIND OF FORCE? It was often reproached, and from very different points of view, by Radicals and Tories alike, as being lacking in crusading zeal. It certainly was not a heated or violently enthusiastic periodical. But as Jeffrey pointed out, it not only advocated and, advocated effectively, a number of very tangible reforms, from the abolition of the slave trade and Catholic Emancipation to reforms in criminal law (for example, in the odious game laws), but in the Edinburgh of 1802, this reforming attitude required courage and an indifference to the easy rewards of law and politics that was not too common then and is perhaps not too common to-day. For the *Edinburgh Review* was definitely a party organ. It was bound in the "buff and blue" which Charles James Fox had made the Whig uniform because it was the uniform that was worn by that notorious rebel, Colonel Washington of Virginia.[1] It is true that the *Edinburgh Review* was not, at the beginning, as definitely a party organ as it soon became. Its most illustrious contributor at this time was that sound Tory, Walter Scott. But he soon found himself alienated by the irritating and sceptical tone of the *Edinburgh Review* and, with other like-minded Tories, founded the *Quarterly Review* as a counterweight. The *Edinburgh Review*, alas, is gone, but the *Quarterly Review*, which survives, for all its substantial merits never had the fame, the weight of international reputation of the *Edinburgh*. Perhaps no review so solidly committed to defending the established order of things as the *Quarterly* was, could have had the impact of a subversive periodical like the *Edinburgh*. And it is possibly not accidental that the decline of the *Edinburgh* as a political force seems to have begun when the Whigs finally got into power. It is true that by that time the *Edinburgh* had acquired its most famous contributor, Macaulay. But the *Edinburgh* under McVey Napier was not the *Edinburgh* of Francis Jeffrey, not the magazine that Goethe read (as he read the French newspaper, *Le Globe*).

In another way, the *Edinburgh* was a pioneer setting a most useful precedent. It refused from the beginning to be the house organ of its publisher, Constable. As far as it was, in the usual sense of the term, a "review," Constable's books got no better treatment than those of any other publisher. This important and healthy precedent was imitated by the *Athenaeum*, when, after an uncertain start, it became in 1831 the most important critical weekly. Charles Wentworth Dilke was as relentless an enemy of "puffing" and of an alliance between reviews and publishers as the *Edinburgh*, and as the editor of a weekly as compared with a quarterly, he was under much more constant pressure, the more that the *Athenaeum* was published in London where, even then, publishers and their publicity men congregated.

BUT IN WHAT SENSE and in what spirit was the *Edinburgh Review* a review, that is to say, a periodical devoted to giving an account of important publications, new or old? In a limited sense, it *was* critical in the loose and vulgar sense of the term. Its motto, borrowed from an obscure Latin poet, *Judex damnatur quum nocens absolvitur*—"the judge is condemned when the guilty man gets off"—expresses only too well the critical spirit of the *Edinburgh Review*.[2] It took a very high and mighty line towards literary productions that it didn't like. It was never forgiven for Jeffrey's hectoring remark to Wordsworth and the "Lakers": "This will never do." But Jeffrey did see, if not very warmly, the merits of Keats, and he never descended to the combination of stupidity and snobbery that marked the literary criticism of the *Quarterly*.

But the *Edinburgh* (and the *Quarterly*) were only in a very formal sense reviews, that is periodicals devoted to giving an account of literature. As the greatest of *Edinburgh Reviewers* put it candidly, the books which were reviewed were often mere literary fictions like the legal fiction of John Doe and Richard Roe. The book nominally reviewed was very often an occasion for a long, polemical, and more or less original article on some subject for whose treatment the book cited gave the formal justification. There was a good deal of literary

[1] It has been argued that Colonel Washington was really wearing the uniform of an officer in the Virginia militia when that body was loyal to King George III. Neither George III nor George Washington nor Mr. Fox seems to have thought of this explanation.

[2] Sydney Smith, in one of his happiest Latin jokes, had suggested that the motto ought to come from Virgil, *Silverstrem tenui musam meditaris avena*, "we cultivate the muses on a little oatmeal." This was turned down as too frivolous and soon it would have become nonsensical as the *Edinburgh Review* not only paid as a property, but paid its contributors extremely well. For example, it made it possible for young Macaulay to have his political career.

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criticism, but the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly* were both not only literary magazines, but instruments of political warfare.

They did not pretend to be impartial in their judgment of men, books, or issues. A book by a notorious Tory (in the *Edinburgh*) or by a notorious Whig (in the *Quarterly*) got very rough justice—if justice. Macaulay reviewing Southey or John Wilson Croker's edition of Boswell's *Life* made no pretence of being impartial. In the case of the attack on Southey, Macaulay, as a semi-utilitarian, was perhaps justified in attacking with all his power the romantic conservatism of the Jacobin turned Tory—and Poet Laureate. But the assiduity with which Macaulay hunted out errors in Croker's edition of Boswell was inspired less by pedantic passion for accuracy than by party bias. It is hard to sympathise with John Wilson Croker, but he was a better scholar than Macaulay knew or at any rate Macaulay admitted. Few periodicals to-day, even in our age of hatred and passion, would dare to display such bias and animosity as the great English reviews did. The utilitarian *Westminster Review* was less openly acrimonious, but the reader knew what he could expect when he bought or borrowed any of these famous periodicals, and *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's* among the monthlies were just as partisan although in a more amiable way.

A review had to be *about* something and *for* something—as ENCOUNTER tries to be to-day.

BUT BY THE TIME of the accession of Queen Victoria, the great days of the quarterlies were over. The rapidly increasing middle-class in all the new booming cities, as well as in London and Edinburgh, didn't want to wait three months for the latest views and reviews. The railway was altering the tempo of life and already the success of independent weeklies like the *Athenaeum*, the *Spectator*, later the *Economist*, as well as of monthly magazines like *Fraser's* and *Blackwood's*, threatened to condemn the quarterlies to the fate of the horse-and-buggy or the stage coach. And the influence of foreign publications was felt. *The Saturday Review*, as much of a pioneer in 1855 as the *Edinburgh* had been in 1802, was largely intended to be a London version of the Paris *Revue des Deux Mondes* (a fortnightly). And as far as this paternity is established, it created a family, for the New York *Nation* of 1865 was an imitation of the *Saturday Review* and in turn the London *Nation* of 1907 was an imitation of the New York *Nation*, and is now embedded with the *Athenaeum* in the *New Statesman*.[3]

For a long time, the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was to Europe what the *Edinburgh* had earlier been. It was a model and a source of information and doctrine. But even in France the press was not as free as in England, social divisions were deeper, party spirit more bitter. It is true that the *Revue des Deux Mondes* was the organ of the *"gens bien"* as was the *Académie Française*, of which the review was so often the house organ. But not all *"bien pensants"* were *"croyants"* and under the Third Republic the anti-clericalism and levelling tendencies of the politicians in power made the *Revue des Deux Mondes* an organ of rather futile opposition.[4]

But whatever the reason, Paris a century ago —and now—was far more hospitable to critical magazines, normally appearing fortnightly, than London ever was. There was the *Revue de Paris*, for instance. There were advanced literary reviews like the *Revue Blanche* (equivalents of the American little magazines) and just before the first World War, there was founded the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, which, up to the collapse of 1940, was the most eminent "cultural" magazine in the world.[5]

But the French review, although it enjoyed and still enjoys a great deal of popular support (not that any of the reviews were ever popular in the ordinary sense), suffered not only from the bitter partisanship of French intellectual life, but from the role played by newspaper *feuilletons*. It is easy to forget how much of Sainte-Beuve's immense *œuvre* was written for newspapers, as it is easy to forget that Taine wrote some of his best social criticism for a

[3] The oddest example of periodical Mendelism is to be found in the fact that Ross intended the *New Yorker* to be a child of *Punch*—so that modern *Punch* is its own grandchild, as far as it is a child of *The New Yorker*.

[4] A famous anecdote tells of a group of highly estimable gentlemen politicians in Paris meeting to think how to deal with some new outrage of the government and of that honest Catholic Republican, Étienne Lamy, saying: "Yes! We must take action! I'll write an article for the *Revue des Deux Mondes!*"

[5] If I may be permitted the reference, in reviewing Professor Justin O'Brien's admirable anthology, *NRF*, for ENCOUNTER [March 1959], I noted the French parochialism of the *NRF* and the platitude and emptiness of much of its social and political commentary. This detracted from its total worth but did not destroy its great and deserved prestige.

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periodical very unlike the *Edinburgh Review*, *La Vie Parisienne*—which was not much more like the journal of that name published to-day than the modern New York *Nation* is like the *Nation* of E. L. Godkin.

IN COUNTRIES where the 18th-century attitude to the press still dominated the laws and the customs, literary reviews, formally confining themselves to literature and learning, were more effective organs of political criticism than were the shackled newspapers. It was impossible to write seriously about the past and present of Italian culture in the *Nuova Antologia* without revealing a constant undertone of hostility to the rule of the *"Tedeschi,"* the Austrians. In a remarkable series of articles in ENCOUNTER, Sir Isaiah Berlin has told us how literary critics like Belinsky brought fresh air into the prison cell of the Russia of Nicholas I. No government, in Russia or Prussia, was then ready to suppress all the organs of educated and cultivated opinion and what the Japanese police were to call "dangerous thoughts" got loose in more than one authoritarian society.

It was perhaps a sign of a "colonial" attitude that *The North American Review* so closely imitated the *Edinburgh* and the *Quarterly*. The United States was not yet united enough, physically or spiritually, for the imitation to be very successful. Posterity was to take more interest in *The Southern Literary Messenger* because of its editor, Poe, than in the "cold roast Boston" offered by the *North American Review*. But it performed a useful function in bringing to the attention of a still provincial "readership," not only the ideas and literary achievements of the Mother Country, but those of the European continent. The same role was performed at one level in France by the *Revue Britannique* and, at a much higher level, by the *Revue Germanique*, which brought strange and exciting news across the Rhine to Paris.

It was the good fortune of the first really successful American review or magazine, the *Atlantic Monthly*, that its emissary in England, Charles Eliot Norton, lost the manuscripts he had piously collected in London, and so the *Atlantic* started out as a purely American periodical, printing, unlike *Harper's Magazine* at that time, original fiction, verse, criticism, political commentary. *Harper's* was soon to imitate the *Atlantic* and, for a generation at least, the United States rejoiced in a group of monthlies of great merit. Middle-brow? Maybe. They were not literary pioneers in the manner of the *Revue Blanche* or the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. But they provided a market for Henry James and Mark Twain, for Howells and for many English novelists.

THE SAME EVOLUTION can be seen in England. When Smith Elder asked Thackeray to edit their new magazine, *The Cornhill*, they were "starting a trend." Thackeray no longer printed his novels in parts sold by themselves. It became the normal method of publication, for Trollope, for Hardy, to publish in serial form in monthly magazines, which were now not mere vehicles for the genius and the grievances of a great man like the various periodicals Dickens founded. They *had* other contributors, but to describe Dickens as a mere editor would be like describing Stalin (as Shaw did) as a mere party employee. The new magazines were as independent of the publishing houses that established them as the *Athenaeum* or the *Edinburgh Review*. And they were the arenas in which some of the great Victorian "moments of truth" took place.[6]

As arenas for controversy, the two most important English reviews were the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Fortnightly Review*.[7]

Of course, some of the great debates took place in what we may call the "trade papers." *Nature* became the organ of the scientists (although as H. G. Wells was to point out, it detested the word). But some of the scientific controversies of the age *were* fought out in the more general reviews, mainly as an aspect of the war or accommodation between "science" and "religion." Did geology invalidate Genesis or simply reveal "vestiges of Creation" in a form that could he harmonised with Holy Writ? The battle became hotter after the publication of the *Origin of Species*. Huxley was as important as a polemical writer in the reviews as he was as

[6] It was in *Macmillan's Magazine* that Kingsley rashly launched his attack on Newman. Newman did not use or think of using the quasi-official Catholic *Dublin Review* to reply in. It was a quarterly and Newman needed a quick-firing gun, so he issued the *Apologia* in parts. In any case, the attempt of Newman and his friends to establish critical Catholic reviews in England had failed. The reign of Pius IX was not auspicious for such enterprises.

[7] The *Fortnightly* was started in imitation of the French reviews, appearing every fortnight. But the English reader firmly refused to think except in weekly and monthly cycles. The *Fortnightly* became a monthly, but kept its name.

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an original scientist. Nor were the controversies purely "scientific." A great deal of that remarkable tract, Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, appeared in the *Cornhill*. The tough-minded *Saturday Review* not only battled with Arnold, but attacked much of the philistine host with vigour. (That it worshipped Dagon itself was a charge made by Arnold that people like James Fitzjames Stephen resented but did not think basically serious.)

One of the great editors of this period, John Morley of the *Fortnightly*, made his review the springboard of a brilliant political career, as Henry Adams failed to do with the *North American Review*. The Lord Robert Cecil who, with Morley, had been one of the regular contributors to the *Saturday Review* moved on to become the great Lord Salisbury and three times Prime Minister (although it is not likely that his political career gained much from his *Saturday* background). Even Mr. Gladstone more than once entered the battle, like Achilles coming to hearten the Greeks (for Greeks, read Christians).

BUT GREAT as was the contribution of the reviews, quarterly, monthly, weekly, to the literary and even the artistic and scientific culture of the new capitalist societies in Western Europe and in North America, they fell on evil times, at any rate in Britain and in the United States. How many great names disappeared or were given formal respect in "mast-heads" like that of the *New Statesman*, incorporating three once-famous periodicals, the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, and the *Saturday Review* (for the *Week-End Review* was the true heir of the *Saturday*, not the eccentric and often funny weekly sermon sheet owned by Lady Houston). The habit of serial publication of novels which had brought so many readers to the *Cornhill*, the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, died.[8] The rise of the magazine sections of Sunday newspapers in America like the rise of the literary pages of the "quality" Sunday papers in London weakened the market. Rising costs killed such important organs of critical opinion in England as F. R. Leavis' *Scrutiny* and Cyril Connolly's *Horizon*. It would have been easy and natural to murmur *"sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt,"* lament both the loss of platforms and the difficulties put in the way of the bright young man, "commencing author."

But there has not been a totally unrelieved story of decay. For ENCOUNTER stayed afloat when it was launched in the now remote era of 1953.

IT WAS IN A WORLD in which the old-fashioned review, a vehicle of exposition and controversy, was (in the English-speaking world at least) dying that ENCOUNTER was born. It was not quite accidental that in the United States the successors of *The North American Review* and of the *Edinburgh*, of the *Saturday Review* (London), and of the other organs of critical opinion, such as those that are now embedded in the *New Statesman* (London), etc., were and are mainly academic periodicals like the *Yale Review*, the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and the other admirable journals which do great credit to the American academic world, but reflect, adversely, on the controversial magazine in the English-speaking world, although the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine* continue to provide both a forum in which great public questions can be debated and a means of enlightening both suburbia and ex-urbia.

It is not accidental that in the history of ENCOUNTER, three of the most important dates have been the death of Stalin, the workers' insurrection in East Germany and Poland, and the desperate and disastrous effort of the Hungarian people to free themselves from their liberators.

Of course, the great traditional reviews paid attention to foreign affairs, but both in England and in the United States it was possible to treat such events as the establishment of the Third Republic and of the Second Reich, the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Turkish revolution of 1908–9 rather in the manner of the *Times* (London) reporting the death of the Akhoond of Swat. No one before 1914 or 1917 could possibly have foreseen a situation in which the basic and permanent preoccupation of an important review would be the designs of a great power on the tranquillity and free action of such nations, long immune from outside threats, as Britain and the United States.

ENCOUNTER was founded to deal with a specific and still deeply important problem. The range of difference between a tough-minded and, on the whole, conservative journal like the

[8] Since little is said in defence of the great American newspaper butcher, Frank Munsey, it might be noted that his "muck-raking" *Munsey's Magazine* experimented for a time with printing complete novels in each number. Among the authors thus given a wide public and substantial cash rewards were the young P. G. Wodehouse and the mature but far from best-selling Joseph Conrad.

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Saturday Review (London) and a tough-minded and liberal journal like the *Nation* (New York) was negligible compared with the difference between a review like ENCOUNTER and any Communist or fellow-travelling review like *Pensée* in Paris or the *Labour Monthly* in London.

ENCOUNTER, from its foundation, has been a *"journal de combat."* It has been the organ of protest against the *"trahison des clercs."* I am expressing my own opinion, but one which I have held for a very long time, that the chief Communist crime in the world of the mind has been the abolition of the idea of truth as an assumed qualification in the case of any intellectual. I should be very foolish if I professed to believe that all intellectuals in the past were devoted to truth. Some great figures of the past, like Carlyle, regarded truth as something they could manipulate. They thought with their hearts; they scorned the devotion to formal objectivity of people like John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold. But Carlyle, if he invented Frederick the Great (his Frederick the Great) did not abolish Barnave or Mirabeau as Bolshevik historiography abolished Trotsky, Bukharin, and Beria. It was and is possible to be sardonic about the optimism of scientists like Huxley and great expositors of the scientific creed like H. G. Wells, but this is very far from the reluctant but efficient swallowing of Lysenko demonstrated by some eminent ornaments of the Sorbonne whose devotion to the Party line completely replaced their formal devotion to science.

This is a world in which no nonsense, no outrageous defiance of truth or plausibility, is intolerable. The same people can and do condemn Rajk and exculpate him without any visible sense of shame. Mendacity has been erected into a system of politics. There has been an assumption, not totally unjustified, that the average liberal intellectual has no memory and will swallow any nonsense coming from an authorised source, the authorised source being the current practice of the Soviet Union. Thus, the revelation by Khrushchev, in the famous discourse to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., "revealed" to many people the real nature of the Stalinist régime. There had been, of course, abundant evidence of its true character long before Khrushchev blew the gaff. There had been plenty of evidence of the character of the Soviet empire in East Germany and in Poland and in Hungary before the Budapest rising, that heroic and desperate adventure which, alas, unlike the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in Petrograd, did not change the world.

IN AN ERA that might well be called "the age of impudence" a journal like ENCOUNTER has necessarily been combative. It has necessarily taken sides. There are, of course, drawbacks to the role which ENCOUNTER has chosen to assume. It was the tepidity of the *Edinburgh Review* in the face of the British resistance to Bonaparte that led to the founding of the *Quarterly Review*. A review like the *Edinburgh*, which sets itself "above the battle" can, of course, avoid many mistakes and can avoid certain types of enemies. But ENCOUNTER has chosen to risk having enemies and is honoured by the enemies it has made.

It suffers, like all periodicals in the modern world, from the effective suppression of knowledge about conditions affecting a third of the human race. The Russia of Nicholas I, the China of the Empress Dowager, almost the Japan of the Tokugawa Shoguns were open societies about which facts could be established, compared with the Soviet Union and still more the Chinese People's Republic. For example, a very vivid controversy in ENCOUNTER between Mr. Colin Clark and Mr. Peter Wiles about the rate of Soviet economic growth could hardly have taken this form before 1914, because the Russia of the last Romanov Czar was so much more open to inspection than the Soviet Union is to-day. It is possible that there were equivalents, in senile credulity to the Webbs and Shaw, before 1914, but their bletherings could be offset by the reporting of people like Bernard Pears and Elinor Glynn—to take two very widely separated critics of Czarist Russia. It was possible for George Kennan (uncle of the famous Russian expert of the State Department and Princeton) to report on the Russian prison system and to report to such effect that Nicholas II introduced some very important reforms. But to give an example from the files of ENCOUNTER, it has proved totally impossible to discover what happened to D. S. Mirsky who was foolish enough to go back to Russia and to learn what the advanced penological system of that country involved.

The necessary combative role of ENCOUNTER is illustrated again and again, in the feature called "From the Other Shore" (a title borrowed, I think, from Herzen). But we should remember, if we wish to be just not only to

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ENCOUNTER, but to the large class of, no doubt, deserving "Sovietologists," that before 1914, indeed even in Hitler's Germany, it would have been impossible to impose so much secrecy and to lie so boldly and so successfully as has been done in the Soviet Union, in China, and in that preposterous and odious state, the East German Democratic Republic.

It is necessary to say these things because the role of a journal like ENCOUNTER with its continual concern with reminding us of foreign realities is necessarily an ungrateful one. We do not want to be reminded of the degree to which so many conquests of the Enlightenment have been lost. We do not want to be reminded of the degree to which lying for a good cause has been accepted as part of the necessary working morals of our time. There are many people, some of them merely silly, some of them silly and dishonest and others dishonest but not silly, who resent, quite rightly, the obsession of ENCOUNTER with the promulgation of uncomfortable truths. Yet if the file of ENCOUNTER is examined it will provide far less reason to ask the question, "How could he ever have said that?" than if one examined the files of—well, no names, no pack-drill.

BUT IT WOULD BE highly misleading to represent ENCOUNTER as a journal devoted exclusively to a crusade. There may be, there *must* be some meaning in the fact that the most famous article ever published in ENCOUNTER was that of the Hon. Nancy Mitford on the "English Aristocracy," which acquainted us with the sociological classification, invented by Professor Ross of the University of Birmingham, of "U" and "non-U."[9] No doubt, the avidity shown by the English intelligentsia for discussions of class, in the Proustian sense, reveals something distressing about the state of the nation, and Mr. Evelyn Waugh, in his open letter to the 'Honble. Mrs. Peter Rodd," correctly revised Miss Mitford's optimistic view of the financial and genealogical state of the English aristocracy. Perhaps, a final word on the whole controversy was said by a friend of mine, a member of an old English Catholic family, as genuinely "gentle" to the Mitfords. She was asked had she read the famous article, and replied: "No, it's not U to read Miss Mitford."

READING THE FILE of ENCOUNTER, I asked myself what were the articles that I remembered most easily and with most pleasure? One was, of course, Miss Mitford's article. Another was Lionel Trilling's article on *Mansfield Park*: another was Mr. Colin Welch's assault on Miss Enid Blyton. But of course, I remember others. There was Sir Isaiah Berlin's dazzling evocation of the great age of the Russian intelligentsia before the Crimean War, a brilliant work of historical reconstruction that ought to be made compulsory reading in Moscow and in certain cultural caves of Western Europe. It was in ENCOUNTER that Sir Charles Snow's famous description of the two cultures got its first wide audience. It was in ENCOUNTER that I learned what astonishing difficulties Mr. Arthur Waley had had to face in translating the *Tale of Genji*. (Even if the implication was that Mr. Waley was, in effect, the author of the great novel so many of us have read with dazzled admiration, all the better for Mr. Waley.) There have been some recent controversies like the discussion of the realities of Castro's Cuba and of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In ENCOUNTER one can trace the history of the Pasternak controversy and the comforting revelation of how far in Poland, in Hungary, and even in Russia itself the attempt to make the mind captive, to outdo the Holy Synod, has failed. One can even hope that "the hundred flowers" will flourish in China when chairman Mao and his adulators have gone to their ancestors. But it would be unjust to ENCOUNTER to think of it exclusively as a "journal de combat." It has been a forum for literary and philosophical controversies, a forum in which the Oxford analysts were discussed with no visible political overtones. ENCOUNTER has treated the fine arts seriously and has illustrated them in a way that its great ancestors could not have rivalled. There has been a lot of good verse and (who knows?) some poetry published. There have been admirable short stories and admirable and important testimonies from behind the Iron Curtain. There have been controversies exciting to academics like the debate on the rise of the gentry in 17th-century England. There have been apologias and rejoinders, reviews half as long as those in the *Edinburgh* and perhaps, at times, not

[9] It is impossible to discover from ENCOUNTER in what language Professor Ross gave his famous paper in Helsinki or what was the language of the society which he addressed, French, German, Swedish or Finnish. Professor Ross' own article in ENCOUNTER leaves the question open. Perhaps, like the academy of Lund, the Philological Society of Helsinki conducts its proceedings in French?

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much less severe though, we may hope, not so violently partisan. (*Partisan Review* has given a more respectable tone to the word than it had a century ago, and in Mr. Dwight Macdonald, one of the most valued and valiant contributors to ENCOUNTER.) We have had accounts, increasingly pessimistic, of the Bhoodan movement in India, and controversies over the character of English culture. Only two important aspects of human life have not been so much neglected as ignored. Religion, even in the traditional sense of controversy and name-calling, has been missing. And possibly more significant, although the readers of ENCOUNTER have more than once had their attention called to the consequence of science (in discussions of THE BOMB), there has been little about science as such. Sir Charles Snow's diagnosis of the two cultures in ENCOUNTER has been borne out by the practice of the journal.

BUT READING the file of the first ten years of ENCOUNTER, I have been struck by how much is still as lively and valuable as when it was first published. A contributor argued that articles in a periodical like this *should* be ephemeral. It is a defensible point of view and many, or at any rate, some, articles were ephemeral, in a good sense. But many were timely without being ephemeral and ENCOUNTER has both reflected the temper of our time of troubles and affected the climate of opinion for good ends. *Ad multos annos.*

Neither Nor

I would neither love nor hate
But sad for me I learned too late
That I must either love or hate.

I would neither live nor die.
I want to watch a distant sky,
Yet I live and I will die.

I would be neither young nor old
And yet the sun bids flowers unfold
And I am young who will be old.

I would be neither poor nor rich
The football pool's a fecund ditch
The penny's poor that makes me rich.

I would neither sink nor swim
And yet the water has this whim
That I must either sink or swim.

O half by half and two by two
I am bisected through and through
By all the things I wouldn't do.

Brian Higgins

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Colin MacInnes

Sterilities (and Virilities)

"How are you..." somebody asks in popular speech—then adds the mysterious, pregnant "...in yourself?" A casual query thus becomes a searching probe of your whole physical and psychic being. So if, in the same spirit, we ask of England not just "How is it?" but "How in itself?" the answer, in identical idiom, must be "Poorly." Everyone notices this national malaise, and if we seek its causes a key may be the realisation most of us have *lost the sense of enjoyment in being English*. About this I have (especially after the July Encounter) contradictory impressions—that our wan languor is due to sterilities in our social life, but that latent vigour to enjoy being ourselves again exists and awaits expression.

To begin with the sterilities, we can all see some paralysing nostalgias:

Lament for Empire: The absurdity is that we ought to be rejoicing; for it is surely apparent that once a subject people is ideologically awakened, it can only be held by force of South African dimensions accompanied by a loss, within the ruling country itself, of political freedoms and moral decencies—as witness the case of Portugal, in which sad land a "colonial" style government duplicates those of its colonies overseas. The French disengagement was so tardy that colonial stigmata now appear in metropolitan France: torture, violence, treason trials, failure of democratic will. By contrast, the Italians and Dutch lost empire early, and were liberated: their condition, economically and spiritually, is more prosperous and healthy than before. Our own withdrawal is incomplete in Malta, Central Africa, the Persian Gulf and Borneo, so we still face a double danger: of trying to use force abroad we have neither the means nor even will to use, and of damaging our social life through the immutable law that colonial practices return to corrupt the metropolitan power.

These truths—or arguments—are detestable to the older kind of English patriot: to say so is to be, for him, a coward denying a splendid heritage. But I do not deny the heritage: up till the mid-19th century imperialism, with its destructions, had also a creative function; and had one lived at any time between the Elizabethan and Victorian eras, one would surely—unless gifted with unusual foresight and humanity—have applauded and taken part in it. The national doubt about imperialism came in the Kipling era, and arose more from anxieties over Ireland, and South Africa at the time of the Boer War, than as yet over India, chief seat of English imperial power. The tone of hysterical emphasis in Kipling's lesser patriotic verse is typical of this growing national neurosis: the affirmation is too frenetic to be convincingly assured. (When English imperialism was confident, poets didn't write of it save in flowery allusions to Cathay and distant Ind.)

The empire is now long gone, yet the wake continues: openly or in secret, nostalgiacs of all classes mourn it. We mourn what belongs to history, and which would destroy us if it did not.

Monarchical Magic: Unfortunately, in Altrincham-Muggeridge days, only the cream (or skimmed milk) of this theme was delivered to us and no analysis was made in depth. I have read Henry Fairlie's justification of monarchic principle, an excellent statement of the thoughtful conservative attitude. I understand the argument that a monarchy inhibits dictatorial demagogues (though it didn't in Italy, Spain, or Greece), and that as a symbol of continuity the hereditary form is more effective than any other (but if so, how has the papacy survived far longer by election?). Yet my belief is the English monarchy has a stifling effect. From it there descend, amid waves of soothing syrup (in which is implanted the tincture of a menace), a faded, valueless concoction of privilege, self-admiration and illusion. To take but one instance, when a princess didn't go to Paris the popular notion was that this would rock de Gaulle, whereas Frenchmen found the gesture

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laughably pathetic. Or to take another, the Press assessments of the success or otherwise of the Australian tour were couched in terms that suggested analysis of racing form. In England itself, the blissful rapture of the adulation of the multitudes is matched—nay, exceeded—by the boyish (no other word) adulation of the mighty. One has the impression Britons believe no disaster, economic or political, can touch us so long as we possess this priceless asset: the envy of the world, the totem guarding us from cruel reality.

The monarchy's chief function is no longer constitutional, as is imagined, but to be emblem of a national religion. I do not speak here of the monarch's role as head of two state churches, but of an essentially tribal symbol whose worship is a compulsive lay faith. Well, this is all right if we know what we trust, which is no less than magic. At the time of Edward VIII's abdication the magic failed us, and the turmoil of the nation at this utterly minor event was wonderfully alarming to behold. Not a king but a magician was overthrown; and I thought of the frenzy with which Egyptian priests and people tried to erase the memory of Akhenaton; or—since the sun-god was a prodigious figure—of the fury by which Roman legionaries destroyed overnight a holy emperor, and put up another.

But if a monarch is personally impeccable, wherein lies any danger? The answer is no human creature can ever be what Englishmen now demand of the occupant of their throne: which is no longer to be a man or woman, but a human god, no less. The warning is now not "put not your trust in princes", it is put—or do not put—your trust in a terrestrial deity. The peril of this is to afford a false sense of protection against dangers, and encourage reluctance to face and overcome them.

That most of my countrymen of every class will regard these notions as foolish, vulgar, and irrelevant to our graver problems, I do not doubt. Even the thoughtful are so bored and embarrassed by this theme that they do not wish to think any more about it. By unspoken agreement, serious discussion of the effects of monarchy on our life has been abandoned: the subject, which is intensely political, is now outside the realm of politics. But to a people that has not yet lost its political instinct, nothing can be outside this realm.

WORSHIP OF LAW: Respect for the law is a prime English quality. What is positive in this instinct is a feeling the social contract must override individual inclination. What is negative is a superstitious worship of abstraction.

Laws are debated by the House of Commons. This consists of men and women of perhaps above average talent, and perhaps above average human fallibility. During their process of legal gestation, we see them in this way and criticise them; as soon as their laws are enacted, we regard the end-product with awe. Now clearly if there are to be laws, a law passed is a thing of another kind from a law being debated: a decision has been made in our names, and whatever its nature we must see it differently—if only because of the power that can now enforce it. But our critical faculty towards our laws should not be dimmed once acts of Parliament become the law.

The English legal code is profuse and ancient. No one can doubt it is cluttered with enactments irrelevant to social needs and moral conventions of our day. Yet these statutes fearsomely survive; and because of our mystical admiration for the law, we do not question them. What we need as much as a parliament constantly creating laws, is one as constantly repealing them. Laws, of course, do get repealed, but with extreme infrequency, the passion of legislators being to enact, not disenact. Thus we are bound up in an increasingly tight legal cocoon: what we need is a constant process of unwinding.

Laws are applied by the legal profession. This is a minute body, numbering a few thousands, whose domination of our lives is rapidly growing. Their professional beginnings may be hard, but their subsequent authority is enormous. Alone of the nation (except for the Secret Service) their transactions are protected by privilege. When they become judges their powers grow even vaster.

An English judge was always once a barrister (not even a solicitor or—as in Continental Europe—a man trained from the outset for the magistrature). As such, he pleaded cases this way or that for fees, but once he becomes a judge, acquires a mysterious objectivity. His emoluments are high and, unlike everybody else's (even the prime minister) in part tax free. He is practically irremovable. He can, by due process of the law, cause death. His knowledge of our lives, though by hearsay extensive, is in direct terms negligible: it must be, since his function obliges him to remain aloof from those he judges. This ignorance does not prevent him from making moral (not even legal)

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declarations about his fellow creatures that are uninformed and pitiless.

When medical students qualify, they walk the wards of hospitals before practising upon us. Young engineers work on building sites, even politicians know the realities of the hustings. Judges send men to prison—even the death chamber—without ever visiting these places, let alone the social breeding-grounds of crime. When the criminal emerges from his sentence, no judge ever asks him to report personally on its consequences.

At Nuremberg, allied judges, two of them British, sent Germans to death and Spandau for placing the state above personal responsibility. At the Vassall tribunal, a judge admonished a reluctant witness for not putting the claims of the state above the promptings of his conscience.

Law is created by men for men: it, and its servants, ought not to function beyond the judgment of mankind. In England, our respect for the law has become so disproportionate that we regard it almost as god-given; instead of being what it should be, a practical convenience mutable by the general will.

THE TORMENT OF SECRECY: This is the title of Professor Edward Shils' study of the effects of "security" neuroses in America during the McCarthy era. An equivalent volume about English conditions badly needs writing now.

All nations have secret services for internal security and foreign espionage: this is a fact of international life which will endure so long as nations do. In a democracy, the agreeable convention is that all estates of the realm operate more or less openly and are subject to democratic control. So far as secret services go, this has never been the case.

The difficulty, obviously enough, is that to have effective secret services their activities must be secret. The democratic safeguards are supposed to be that these bodies are responsible to an elected prime minister, and are themselves composed of democratic citizens. That the prime minister knows, in a general way, what these services are doing, cannot be doubted; that he can have any more than this broad idea is quite impossible; there are only twenty-one hours in his working day, and he has other preoccupations. As to recruitment to these bodies, commonsense will tell us this, especially in higher reaches, must be from upper sectors of our society, particularly the armed forces. No one can question the courage and patriotism of these people, but one can doubt how representative they are of our nation politically. I can imagine, for instance, many a nihilist in the upper regions of these bodies, but somehow not many socialists. I can equally imagine that whereas files marked "Stafford Cripps" or "Aneurin Bevan" lie mouldering among their antique records, there never was one labelled "Stanley Baldwin" or "Neville Chamberlain".

The fact is that secret services are bound to be political and also bound, as their size, income and operations all increase, to take on autonomous executive powers. In France, we have seen this happen to such an extent that a special service operating on the fringe of the multitudinous secret services (the *barbousses*) came into existence. In England, thanks to the vastly increased areas of confidential knowledge (due largely to the curse of atomic energy), and to the constant efforts of our enemies to probe this, the activities of secret services become more ubiquitous. For these facts of modern life, the services cannot be blamed. What must be blamed is the abdication of responsibility by our elected representatives, and the insouciance of the public—ourselves—about the matter. It is surely anomalous that, in 1963, these vast bodies with their increasing ramifications should be responsible only to one politician; and not at least to a body of Privy Councillors or former ministers. As to the public, its attitude is one of juvenile and uncritical adulation, epitomised by the schoolboy productions, beloved of one and all, of Ian Fleming.

It is not that anyone wants to know actual secrets (usually uninteresting in themselves, their chief attraction to the morbid being simply that nobody else knows them). But why, in a quite general fashion, should the public not know what these organisations are, do, cost, and in which ways they protect our nation? Why is it deemed seemly, in the U.S.A., that the headquarters of the C.I.A., and the name of its chief executive, should be publicly known? Why, in our country, make something so mysterious out of a mystery?

The recent fuss about the "Spies for Peace" is an illustration. If the government wished to avoid this kind of embarrassment it had only to tell us how, in general terms, it proposed to protect the population in the event of atomic war. If it thinks it could not protect us it should tell us so—multilateralists as well as the others. If it anticipates death on a large scale we should

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know what scale, since some of us would be part of it. If it thinks something could be salvaged it should tell us what. Not to do this is to betray a mistrustful paternalism: to write us off, in the name of "secrecy", as imbeciles who are not to be trusted with the facts of our own lives. And if we accept this, by a false and fearful innocence about "security", we cannot wonder our fates are decided without warning or consultation.

"ANTI" ATTITUDES: There are two chief species (or three, if one throws in the recent francophobia)—anti-Americanism and anti-Communism.

Anti-Americanism takes the contradictory form of intense resentment at the American waxing that has accompanied our waning, coupled with a sycophantic fawning on American power. These envious English worshippers of power betray the further curious inconsistency of expecting the Americans to love us because we once had it and no longer have—this is what these anxious spirits mean by the "special relationship". This, like Scottish pride in the "auld alliance" with France, is something of which no Frenchman has ever heard.

Americans—sentiment in some sectors apart—will esteem us by what we are, not what we were. If they ever show signs of making Mr. Macmillan (or Mr. Harold Wilson) an Honorary Citizen (neither very likely, really), we could be more impressed by that thought than by their having thus honoured Sir Winston Churchill. The folly of this phobia is that we should be considering what we think about *ourselves*, not caring what they think of us, or we of them. Achievement, or the lack of it, will always determine these attitudes realistically.

The logic of anti-Communism is to realise that, in the national sphere, Communist governments wish us ill and will persistently try to harm us if they can. It is not our power they fear, since this is now negligible, nor our imperialist past that they reject, since we have taught them useful lessons in this art. Their real enemy is what remains libertarian in the English spirit which, despite all accompanying faults and weaknesses, survives as a positive concept in the world, and is abhorrent to authoritarian Marxism. As for the internal sphere, the English Communist party, although a genuine radicalism survives in it (and many attractive human beings), is subservient to these authoritarian concepts (at present Russian—later perhaps Chinese)—and if it denied this one could only conclude it would not be a very effective Communist party.

Now to see this—all obvious enough—is one thing: to become so obsessed by it that to be anti-Communist is a substitute for positive thought and action about English life in England, is sterile in the extreme. Could the Cassandras and shrill nannies (as Mr. Hartley, Mr. Conquest or Mr. FitzGibbon) now realise they have made a point long known to everyone, and give us some notions of what fertile forces in our country they are *for*? And could we all remember—though the mental effort has to be constant—that whatever our feelings about American and Russian governments (they must often be bleak enough), against Russians or Americans it is fatal to harbour hostile feelings. The total indentification of a people, who are eternal, with a government, that never is, is one of the tricks by which governments frighten and divide mankind.

THE CURSE OF CLASS: If ever mankind tortured itself to no purpose, we Britons do so with our class aspirations; the trouble being that those who anxiously seek for status do not know what this dream-status really is.

Content with their class (and each sure of its own superiority) are the aristocracy, the landed gentry, the educated middle-classes and those working-class families who, despite increasing affluence, have resolutely adhered to proletarian mores. Betwixt and between these more or less stable groups are millions of unfortunates dissatisfied with what they are, yet doubtful what social postures they should assume (such aspirants call themselves, hopefully, "the better kind of person".)

The class structure in England arises not, as is picturesquely supposed, from ancient lineage or traditional stratification, but from three factors —education, money, and the magnetic presence of a monarchy. Our educational system is geared, with consummate art, to produce and perpetuate class frictions. No for us the educational democracy of talent of the French, nor that of talent plus money of the Americans. Our public, grammar, and state schools partition the young even before puberty is reached. Our universities continue the process into manhood since the distinction between the two old ones, the provincial new ones, and the third hard choice—due to lack of places—of not gong to a university at

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all, are absolute, and mark those who had one experience or the other throughout their lives.

If I am told yes, but Britons like these class divisions, I cannot deny it; and indeed, as a novelist, must own their absurdities have kept us in business for centuries (at the same time preventing us from writing much of general human relevance). At the same time, what a waste of psychic energy all this is. And in practical terms, we may see how our class confusions inhibit national endeavour. Management–T.U. disputes are due not only to the parties being class enemies in the classic Marxist sense, but to their also belonging to specially English categories with different accents, education, social mores. In the Army, the officers are not recruited purely by military talent, but because they are gents (or can pretend to be). In the Courts, because lawyers and magistrates are exclusively bourgeois—and juries, being ratepayers, at least petty-bourgeois—the dice are loaded against any man of another class (if you don't believe this, sit in on a few cases). Even in politics, class fissures hinder national unity: men who do not "speak the same language" cannot understand one another, as Ernest Bevin discovered (or perhaps failed to) when those charming Old Etonians at the Foreign Office took him over.

Among the young, there are happy signs these useless categories are fading. It is true that the grammar school boy, or the undergraduate at a Boat Race university, who bring their scholarship talents from an illiterate background, may have hard adjustments to make and sometimes rend their families by failing to live easily in two worlds. But with the young in general one can see a growing unity, basically classless, due to greater financial independence, sexual liberation, mistrust of the old, hatred of the atom bomb about which (though it may blast or mutate them) they can make no decisions. (Hence the Aldermaston march: which has little to do with the bomb, and a lot to do with the a-political attitudes of the young.)

SEXUAL STRAITJACKETS: There is something obscene about the English adult obsession with the sexuality of the young. If this preoccupation were due to genuine solicitude, to the hope of sparing the younger generation pain and lending it understanding, this would be entirely laudable. But the mainspring is not this: it arises largely from an envious, bullying will to interfere.

The young look around them at the older generations, and what they see mostly is not edifying: they see either unions that are joyless (and technically, so to speak, defective), or else an adult free-for-all from bed to bed. In the name of the wisdom and moral rectitude of this adult generation, its self-appointed spokesmen thunder at juvenile delinquencies: they are immoral, they are promiscuous, they are irresponsible.

The equation, in England, of sexual morality with morality in general is philistine (and irreligious) in the extreme. There are ten commandments and seven deadly sins, but only one in each category interests thunderers. Promiscuity among adults is far more general than among their juniors; and has neither the excuse of experiment nor of marriage vows not yet pronounced. It is true one meets often boys and girls who are "going steady" with a view to marriage (just as one encounters others who are going unsteady with no view to it at all), but this is not the same thing as promiscuity, and has nothing irresponsible about it.

Sex is both immensely serious, since it involves a fellow creature and can create life, but is also delightful, even funny; so one must be responsible (if only to "get the best out of it") and, at the same time, not owlishly solemn—let alone facetious or grubby in the saloon bar manner, greatest of horrors among English sexual attitudes. So many of the older generation seem to have got, with an instinct fatally infallible, the worst of its two worlds by regarding sex pompously without gravity, and greedily without sensuality. From these sad attitudes the younger English generations (which are now among the sexiest in Europe) are resolutely contracting out; and what one may chiefly notice about these adult admonitions without sympathy is that they have little or no effect on what actually happens among the young. These moralising sermons are addressed by adults to one another, and pass right over cropped or *bouffant* heads.

"GREAT MEN" AND "GREATNESS": If you read Lord Beaverbrook on the Lloyd George era, and accept his account as accurate, you must surely cry hosannah we have not the "great figures" of that irresponsibly vainglorious epoch. It is precisely because Lord Attlee was not a "great man" in this treacherously picturesque sense that he was, despite all failings, an effective modern prime minister. It is equally because de Gaulle, with all his courage and panache, perpetuates

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the Bourbon concept of the chief, that he has robbed Frenchmen of their greatest glory which is not *gloire*, but the application of their acute brains and moral consciousness to the daily affairs of national life. It cannot enough be stressed that "great men" of the Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill stamp are perilous in times when what is needed most of all is awakened personal responsibility. What we want is not "great men" but that more men shall behave greatly.

The political and social quality of the English people has always been not in its national leaders, but in the proliferation, at every level and in every class, of men and women who accept the drudgery of social action, and apply their brains to arguing practical alternatives. So long as these thoughtful, active, anonymous individuals exist in profusion, the nation is healthy and has no need of "leaders." The nostalgia for the war years that so many feel, is explained not only by our lost military supremacy but by the belief that Field Marshal Montgomery was the 8th Army, Ernie Bevin was the labour force, and Winston Churchill was the nation. But they were not; if they "led" they were led from behind by thousands of energetic and responsible individuals.

All these sterilities betray a common misunderstanding of tradition: a belief it is what we did, not what we are constantly renewing. Considering how young England is compared with really antique nations, and reflecting how this "traditional" people, in the last century, revolutionised its economy and that of half the globe, one may find this neo-traditionalism surprising. We must stop listening to these vexed, self-torturing, bombastic voices (even if they are our own) that harp continually on the past as if, by miracle, it entitled us to a victorious present. I sometimes feel that if a self-denying ordinance were accepted by us all whereby for one year only (even perhaps a week) we agreed to speak of the present and future only, and keep silence on the past, we would be half way out of our momentary slough of unnecessary despond.

RE-READING this nagging text so far I am reminded, how, if you love your country, you think always first of what you dislike about it. This is not due, as professional patriots think, to a whining moan of personal frustration: it is because you love it that what seems to you blocking its growth and frustrating its beauty is so painful. Hazlitt and Orwell—and, for that matter, Osborne—may seem sour in their strictures about England. But it is not hard to detect, beneath their laments, an unavoidable affection.

So having said what seems to me shackles our nation, I may go on to say why I don't think them everlasting. In the first place, these fetters are self-imposed; and where we bind ourselves, we can also loosen. In the next, I have no doubt the raw material of recovery is there: I mean the personal material, the quality of the English people.

This people (whom I think I can see both from in- and outside, since I have lived half my life in England, half outside it) seem to me gifted, resilient, brave, humorous (*humorous*—I don't speak of that dreadful "English sense of humour"), detached and, above all things—despite all evidence to the contrary—reliable. I would trust an Englishman not because I am one (for "English" throughout kindly include the Celtic fringe), but because he *is* trustworthy: I don't just mean financially, which matters relatively little, but humanly in the tight corner. I also find Englishmen and women glamorous—far more so than peoples who have cornered this reputation, because the English kind of glamour, in all classes, is so throwaway, so casual.

It is maddening to me so splendid a people sit sulking, turning bored backs upon the world. Now the French—I mean the *French*, not the passing fantasies of de Gaulle—do enjoy being French, and bustle about like busy Latin bees. But fifteen years ago they didn't: I recall one saying to me then, *"On n'est pas fier d'être français."* I denied this, more perhaps by faith than reason, and it turned out to be so. I pray for my own people that they may look outward and realise their potentiality.

Power gone, our power must be in brains, skill, enterprise, and cohesion. If the world is really going to destroy itself we cannot stop it; until it does, we can confidently soldier on. Commerce, science, arts, and education (the things Prince Albert spoke of) are what matter; orthodox politics and religion are for the birds. We should stop trying to teach, and begin to learn again: from Africa and Asia as much as Russia or America. We should begin to like ourselves, and less our grandfathers. We should banish anyone who says "don't" (whatever his authority, and even if he is right) and hearken to anyone who says "do," however crazy. We should be gay, libertarian, serious, and energetic, intoxicated with life, not stopping all the time to pick its nose. We should mock smug naysayers, applaud the adventurous. We should stop being "English," and become English men and women.

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Saul Bellow

Some Notes on
Recent American Fiction

GERTRUDE STEIN is supposed to have explained to Hemingway that "remarks are not literature." Here I am offering some remarks, and I make no claim for them whatever. A writer's views on other writers may have a certain interest, but it should be clear that he reads what they write almost always with a special attitude. If he should be a novelist, his own books are also a comment on his contemporaries and reveal that he supports certain tendencies and rejects others. In his own books he upholds what he deems necessary, and usually by the method of omission he criticises what he understands as the errors and excesses of others.

I intend to examine the view taken by recent American novelists and short-story writers of the individual and his society, and I should like to begin with the title of the new book by Wylie Sypher: *Loss of the Self in Modern Literature and Art*. I do not propose to discuss it; I simply want to cite the title, for in itself it tells us much about the common acceptance of what the Spanish critic Ortega y Gasset described some years ago as "the dehumanisation of the arts." One chapter is devoted to the Beats, but, for the most part, Sypher finds, as we might have expected, that the theme of annihilation of Self, and the description of an "inauthentic" life which can never make sense, is predominantly European and particularly French. The names he most often mentions are those of André Gide, Sartre, Beckett, Sarraute, and Robbe-Grillet: writers whose novels and plays are derived from definite theories which make a historical reckoning of the human condition and are peculiarly responsive to new physical, psychological, and philosophical theories. American writers, when they are moved by a similar spirit to reject and despise the Self, are seldom encumbered by such intellectual baggage, and this fact pleases their European contemporaries, who find in them a natural, that is, a brutal or violent acceptance of the new universal truth by minds free from intellectual preconceptions.

In the early 'twenties D. H. Lawrence was delighted to discover a blunt, primitive virtue in the first stories of Ernest Hemingway, and twenty years later André Gide praised Dashiell Hammett as a good barbarian.

EUROPEAN WRITERS take strength from German phenomenology and from the conception of entropy in modern physics in order to attack a romantic idea of the Self, triumphant in the 19th century but intolerable in the 20th. The feeling against this idea is well-nigh universal. The First World War with its millions of corpses gave an aspect of the horrible to romantic over-valuation of the Self. The leaders of the Russian Revolution were icy in their hatred of bourgeois individualism. In the Communist countries millions were sacrificed in the building of socialism, and almost certainly the Lenins and the Stalins, the leaders who made these decisions, serving the majority and the future, believed they were rejecting a soft, nerveless humanism which attempted in the face of natural and historical evidence to oppose progress.

A second great assault on the separate Self sprang from Germany in 1939. Just what the reduction of millions of human beings into heaps of bone and mounds of rag and hair or clouds of smoke betokened, there is no one who can plainly tell us, but it is at least plain that something was being done to put in question

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the meaning of survival, the meaning of pity, the meaning of justice and of the importance of being oneself, the individual's consciousness of his own existence.

IT WOULD BE ODD, indeed, if these historical events had made no impression on American writers, even if they are not on the whole given to taking the historical or theoretical view. They characteristically depend on their own observations and appear at times obstinately empirical.

But the latest work of writers like James Jones, James Baldwin, Philip Roth, John O'Hara, J. F. Powers, Joseph Bennett, Wright Morris, and others shows the individual under a great strain. Labouring to maintain himself, or perhaps an idea of himself (not always a clear idea), he feels the pressure of a vast public life, which may dwarf him as an individual while permitting him to be a giant in hatred or fantasy. In these circumstances he grieves, he complains, rages, or laughs. All the while he is aware of his lack of power, his inadequacy as a moralist, the nauseous pressure of the mass media and the weight of money and organisation, of cold war and racial brutalities.

Adapting Gresham's theorem to the literary situation one might say that public life drives private life into hiding. People begin to hoard their spiritual valuables. Public turbulence is largely coercive, not positive. It puts us into a passive position. There is not much we can do about the crises of international politics, the revolutions in Asia and Africa, the rise and transformation of masses. Technical and political decisions, invisible powers, secrets which can be shared only by a small élite, render the private will helpless and lead the individual into curious forms of behaviour in the private sphere.

Public life, vivid and formless turbulence, news, slogans, mysterious crises, and unreal configurations dissolve coherence in all but the most resistant minds, and even to such minds it is not always a confident certainty that resistance can ever have a positive outcome. To take narcotics has become in some circles a mark of rebellious independence, and to scorch one's personal earth is sometimes felt to be the only honourable course. Rebels have no bourgeois certainties to return to when rebellions are done. The fixed points seem to be disappearing. Even the Self is losing its firm outline.

ONE RECENT American novel deals openly and consciously with these problems: *The Thin Red Line* by James Jones,[1] a book which, describing the gross and murderous conditions of jungle combat, keeps a miraculously sensitive balance and does not weary us with a mere catalogue of horrors. What Mr. Jones sees very precisely is the fluctuation in the value of the life of the individual soldier. Childhood in some cases ends for the fighting man as he accepts the lesson of realism. The attitude of Storm, one of the older soldiers, towards Fife, a younger man, is described as follows: "He [Fife] was a good enough kid. He just hadn't been away from home long enough. And Storm, who had started off bumming during the Depression when he was only fourteen, couldn't find kids like that very interesting." Storm, the mess sergeant, tolerates the inexperienced Fife, but First Sergeant Welsh has no such tolerance. He cannot abide softness and the lack of realism, and he cruelly and punitively teaches the hard lesson to his undeveloped subordinates. Real knowledge as he sees it is brutal knowledge and it must be painfully and brutally learned. The heart of the lesson, as Welsh understands it, is that it matters little—it matters, therefore, not at all—whether any single man survives or falls. Welsh offers no indulgence to anyone and asks none for himself. His message to mankind is that you must cast the cold eye on life, on death.

Mr. Jones shrewdly understands that the philosophy of Welsh is not ultimately hard. Towards himself the sergeant is not fanatically severe, and his toughness betrays a large degree of self-pity. What Jones describes here is the casting off of a childish or feminine or false virtue, despised because it cannot meet the test of survival. In apprehending what is real, Jones' combat soldiers learn a bitter and levelling truth and in their realism revenge themselves on the slothful and easy civilian conception of the Self. The new idea cruelly assails the old, exposing its conventionality and emptiness. Young Fife, after he has gone the rugged course, kills like the rest, becomes quarrelsome, drinks and brawls, and casts off his hesitant, careful, and complaining childishness.

A VERY DIFFERENT SORT of novel, in a peaceful sphere far removed from the explosions and disembowellings of Guadalcanal, is J. F. Power's *Morte d'Urban*,[2] which does not so

[1] *Collins*, London; *Saunders*, New York.
[2] *Gollancz*, London; *Doubleday*, New York.

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much study as brood over the lives of priests belonging to the Order of St. Clement. Father Urban, a well-known preacher and a man of some talent, is transferred for reasons not clearly understood from Chicago, where he has worked effectively, to a new Foundation of the Order in Duesterhaus, Minnesota. To Urban, a sociable and civilised priest, this transfer can only be seen as a mysterious banishment, and he is described by Mr. Powers looking from the train windows at the empty country beyond Minneapolis.

> "... flat and treeless, Illinois without people. It didn't attract, it didn't repel. He saw more streams than he'd see in Illinois, but they weren't working. November was winter here. Too many white frame farmhouses, not new and not old, not at all what Father Urban would care to come to for Thanksgiving or Christmas. Rusty implements. Brown dirt. Grey skies. Ice. No snow. A great deal of talk about this on the train. Father Urban dropped entirely out of it after an hour or so. The Voyageur arrived in Duesterhaus a few minutes before eleven that morning, and Father Urban was the only passenger to get off."

In more ways than one, Father Urban is viewed as the only passenger. At the new Foundation he is, without complaint, in a solitary situation. In charge of the Duesterhaus Foundation is Father Wilfred "... who, on account of his broad nose and padded cheeks, had been called Bunny in the Novitiate. Bunny Bestudik." Father Wilfred's concerns are all of a practical nature. His interests are the interests of any Midwestern American who has to run a place efficiently; he watches the fuel bills, thinks about the pick-up truck and its rubber, the cost of paint, and is anxious to have good public relations. This religious Order is described as a community of consumers. It is the American and average character of activities whose ultimate aim is religious that Mr. Powers wants to describe. His tone is dry and factual as he tells of the discussions of the Fathers who have to heat, paint, and renovate their buildings, sand the floors, tear up old linoleum, lay new tiles in the bathrooms, and this light and dry comedy cannot be maintained through such a long account of the effort to fill up a great emptiness with activity which is insufficiently purposeful. The religion of Father Urban is expressed in steadiness and patience, in endurance, not in fiery strength. His resistance to the prolonged barrenness and vacant busyness of this thoroughly American Order is made in a spirit of mild and decent martyrdom. Indeed the only violent and passionate person in the book is a certain Billy Cosgrove. Billy is rich and generous. He gives lavishly to the Order but he expects also to have his way. He and Father Urban eat shish kebab and drink champagne, play golf and go fishing. With Billy one talks of cars and sailing boats. Urban gets along rather well with spoiled and boisterous Billy until Billy tries to drown a deer in the water of Bloodsucker Lake. Billy has been fishing and is in an ugly mood because his luck has been bad. Seeing a swimming deer, he decides to seize it by the antlers and hold its head under water. As hungry for trophies as the soldiers in *The Thin Red Line*, Billy wants those antlers. Father Urban, who cannot bear his cruelty, starts up the motor of the boat, and Billy falls into the water. For this outrage Billy will never forgive him.

What Father Urban had been thinking just before the appearance of the deer was that in the Church there was perhaps too great an emphasis on dying for the faith and winning the martyr's crown.

> "How about living for the faith? Take Lanfranc and William the Conqueror—of whom it was written (in the Catholic Encyclopædia and Father Urban's notes on a book he might write some day): 'He was mild to good men of God and stark beyond all bounds to those who withsaid his will.'"

Billy Cosgrove turns out to occupy the position of the Conqueror. He is stark beyond all bounds, and Urban is never again to see his face. Nor does Urban seem destined to write his book. He goes to the Novitiate of the Order as Father Provincial, there to deal with practical matters to the best of his ability. But he appears to be succumbing to a brain injury he received while playing golf. He had been struck in the head by a golf ball in Minnesota and is now subject to fits of dizziness. A martyr's crown seems to be waiting Urban as the book ends.

POWERS DOES NOT LOOK at the issue of the single Self and the multitude as nakedly as Jones does, and it is a pity that he chose not to do so, for he might have been able to offer us a more subtle development of the subject. He would have been examining what Mr. Sypher calls "Loss of the Self" from the point of view of a Christian, that is, from the point of view of one who believes in the existence of something more profound than the romantic or secular idea of selfhood, namely, a soul. But there is

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curiously little talk of souls in this book about a priest. Spiritually, its quality is very thin. That perhaps is as Mr. Powers meant it to be. Even at play Father Urban is serving the Church, and, if he is hit in the head by a golf ball, we can perhaps draw our own conclusions from that about the present age viewed as a chapter in the spiritual history of mankind. Here great things will only be dimly apprehended even by the most willing servant of God. Still this seems to me unsatisfactory, and I am not sure that I can bring myself to admire such meekness. A man might well be meek in his own interests, but furious at such abuses of the soul and eager to show what is positive and powerful in his faith. The lack of such power makes faith itself shadowy, more like obscure tenacity than spiritual conviction. In this sense Mr. Powers' book is disappointing.

THE INDIVIDUAL in American fiction often comes through to us, especially among writers of "sensibility," as a colonist who has been sent to a remote place, some Alaska of the soul. What he has to bring under cultivation, however, is a barren emptiness within himself. This is, of course, what writers of sensibility have for a long time been doing and what they continue to do. The latest to demonstrate his virtuosity with exceptional success is John Updike, who begins the title story of his new collection, *Pigeon Feathers*,[3]

> "When they moved to Firetown, things were upset, displaced, rearranged."

The rearrangement of things in new and hostile solitude is a common theme with writers of sensibility. David, the only child of a family which has moved to the country, is assailed by terror when he reads in H. G. Wells' *The Outline of History* that Jesus was nothing more than a rather communistic Galilean, "...an obscure political agitator, a kind of hobo in a minor colony of the Roman Empire." The effect of this is to open the question of death and immortality. David is dissatisfied with answers given by the Reverend Dobson and by his parents. He cannot understand the pleasure his mother takes in her solitary walks along the edge of the woods. "...to him the brown stretches of slowly rising and falling land expressed only a huge exhaustion."

"'What do you want Heaven to be?'" asks David's mother. "He was becoming angry, sensing her surprise at him. She had assumed that Heaven had faded from his head long ago. She had imagined that he had already entered, in the secrecy of silence, the conspiracy that he now knew to be all around him."

Young David in the end resolves the problem for himself æsthetically. Admiring the beauty of pigeon feathers he feels consoled by the sense of a providence. "...the God who had lavished such craft upon these worthless birds would not destroy His whole Creation by refusing to let David live forever." The story ends with a mild irony at the expense of the boy. Nevertheless, there is nothing to see here but the writer's reliance on beautiful work, on an æsthetic discipline and order. And sensibility, in such forms, incurs the dislike of many because it is perceptive inwardly, and otherwise blind. We suspect it of a stony heart because it functions so smoothly in its isolation. The writer of sensibility assumes that only private exploration and inner development are possible, and accepts the opposition of public and private as fixed and indissoluble.

WE ARE DEALING with modern attitudes towards the ancient idea of the individual and the many, the single Self in the midst of the mass or species. In modern times the idea of the unique Self has become associated with the name of Rousseau. Nietzsche identified the Self with the God Apollo, the god of light, harmony, music, reason and proportion, and the many, the tribe, the species, the instincts and passions, with Dionysus. Between these two principles, the individual and the generic, men and civilisations supposedly work out their destinies. It is to Nietzsche, too, that we owe the concept of the "last man." His "last man" is an obituary on the unitary and sufficient Self produced by a proud bourgeois and industrial civilisation. Dostoievsky's Underground Man is an analogous figure. Atheism, rationalism, utilitarianism, and revolution are signs of a deadly sickness in the human soul, in his scheme of things. The lost Selves whose souls are destroyed he sees as legion. The living soul clearly discerns them. It owes this illumination to Christ the Redeemer. More optimistically, an American poet like Walt Whitman imagined that the single Self and the democratic mass might complement each other. But on this side of the Atlantic, also, Thoreau described men as leading lives of quiet desperation, accepting a deadly

[3] *André Deutsch*, London; *Knopf*, New York.

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common life: the individual retires from the community to define or re-define his real needs in isolation beside Walden Pond.

STILL LATER a French poet tells us "*Je est un* autre." Rimbaud and Jarry launch their bombs and grenades against the tight little bourgeois kingdom of the Self, that sensitive sovereign. Darwin and the early anthropologists unwittingly damage his sovereignty badly. Then come the psychologists, who explain that his Ego is a paltry shelter against the unendurable storms that rage in outer reality. After them come the logicians and physical scientists who tell us that "I" is a grammatical expression. Poets like Valéry describe this Self as a poor figment, a thing of change, and tell us that consciousness is interested only in what is eternal. Novelists like Joyce turn away from the individualism of the romantics and the humanists to contemplate instead qualities found in dreams and belonging to the entire species—Earwicker is everybody. Writers like Sartre, Ionesco, and Beckett or like our own William Burroughs and Allan Ginsberg are only a few of the active campaigners on this shrinking front against the Self. One would like to ask these contemporaries, "After nakedness, what?" "After absurdity, what?"

But, on the whole, American novels are filled with complaints over the misfortunes of the sovereign Self. Writers have inherited a tone of bitterness from the great poems and novels of this century, many of which lament the passing of a more stable and beautiful age demolished by the barbarous intrusion of an industrial and metropolitan society of masses or proles who will, after many upheavals, be tamed by bureaucracies and oligarchies in brave new worlds, human anthills.

THESE WORKS OF the first half of our century nourish the imagination of contemporary writers and supply a tonal background of disillusion or elegy.

There are modern novelists who take all of this for granted as fully proven and implicit in the human condition and who complain as steadily as they write, viewing modern life with a bitterness to which they themselves have not established clear title, and it is this unearned bitterness that I speak of. What is truly curious about it is that often the writer automatically scorns contemporary life. He bottles its stinks artistically. But, seemingly, he does not need to study it. It is enough for him that it does not allow his sensibilities to thrive, that it starves his instincts for nobility or for spiritual qualities.

But what the young American writer most often appears to feel is his *own* misfortune. The injustice is done to *his* talent if life is brutish and ignorant, if the world seems overcome by spam and beer, or covered with detergent lathers and poisonous monoxides. This apparently is the only injustice he feels. Neither for himself nor for his fellows does he attack power and injustice directly and hotly. He simply defends his sensibility.

Perhaps the reason for this is the prosperity and relative security of the middle class from which most writers come. In educating its writers it makes available to them the radical doctrines of all the ages, but these in their superabundance only cancel one another out. The middle class community trains its writers also in passivity and resignation and in the double enjoyment of selfishness and good will. They are taught that they can have it both ways. In fact they are taught to expect to enjoy everything that life can offer. They can live dangerously while managing somehow to remain safe. They can be both bureaucrats and bohemians, they can be executives but use pot, they can raise families but enjoy bohemian sexuality, they can observe the laws while in their hearts and in their social attitudes they may be as subversive as they please. They are both conservative and radical. They are everything that is conceivable. They are not taught to care genuinely for any man or any cause.

A RECENT NOVEL like Philip Roth's *Letting Go*[4] is a consummate example of this. Roth's hero, Gabriel, educated to succeed in this world and to lead a good life come hell or high water, is slightly uncomfortable in his selfishness. But nevertheless he wants his, as the saying goes, and he gets his. But he feels obscurely the humiliation of being a private bourgeois Self, the son of an unhappy but prosperous dentist, and he senses that a "personal life" with its problems of personal adjustment and personal responsibility and personal happiness, its ostensibly normal calculations of profit and loss, safety and danger, lust and prudence is a source of shame. But Gabriel's middle-class parents sent him into life to make the grade and that is precisely, with tough singlemindedness,

[4] *André Deutsch*, London; *Random House*, New York.

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what he does. His shame therefore becomes a province of his sensibility, and it is something he can be rather proud of as he does what he was going to do anyway.

Roth's hero clings to the hope of self-knowledge and personal improvement, and he concludes that, with all his faults, he loves himself still. His inner life, if it may be called that, is a rather feeble thing of a few watts. Conceivably it may guide him to a more satisfactory adjustment, but it makes me think of the usher's flashlight in the dark theatre guiding the single ticket-holder to his reserved seat. We are supposed to feel that Gabriel is unusually sensitive, but what we find is that he is a tough young man who cannot be taken in and who will survive the accidents of life that madden or kill genuinely sensitive young men.

I WOULD LIKE now to list the categories suggested by my reading of current novels: the documentation of James Jones, the partially Christian approach of Powers, the sensibility of Updike, and the grievance of Philip Roth. I do not retract my earlier statement that in American novels—for I have decided rather arbitrarily to limit myself to examining these—the tone of complaint prevails. The public realm, as it encroaches on the private, steadily reduces the powers of the individual; but it cannot take away his power to despair, and sometimes he seems to be making the most of that. However, there are several other avenues commonly taken: stoicism, nihilistic anger, and comedy. Stoicism and comedy are sometimes mixed, as in the case of the late German dramatist Bertholt Brecht, but our own contemporary American stoicism comes from Hemingway, and its best American representative at present is John O'Hara.

O'HARA IS properly impatient with people who suffer too intensely from themselves. The characters in his latest collection of stories, *The Cape Cod Lighter*, for whom he shows a decided preference, appear to be bluff, natural people, who know how to endure hurt and act with an elementary and realistic sense of honour. When Ernest Pangborn in the story "The Professors" learns that he has misjudged his colleague Jack Veech and understands at last that Veech's behaviour has been decent and manly, he is moved to say something to him but does not know what to say.

> "A compliment would be rejected, and a word of pity would be unthinkable. Indeed the compliment was being paid to Pangborn; Veech honoured him with his confidence and accorded him honour more subtly, more truly, by asking no further assurances of his silence."

The emotion we feel here is made possible by long reticence, by the deep burial of self-proclamation or self-assertion. We recall the pure decencies of schooldays, and the old chivalrous or military origins of these. These, surely, are virtues of silence and passivity. We endure. We are rewarded by a vision of one another's complexities, but there is no possibility of a flourish, or of rhetoric, or anything that would make an undue personal claim.

This is no longer the sovereign Self of the Romantics, but the decent Self of Kipling whose great satisfaction it is to recognise the existence of a great number of others. These numerous others reduce personal significance, and both realism and dignity require us to accept this reduction. Such stoicism of separateness is the opposite of sensibility with its large claims for the development of internal riches.

BUT THE O'HARAS are curiously like the Updikes in at least one respect. They are scrupulous craftsmen and extraordinarily strict about their writing. Nothing unrealistic, unnatural, or excessive (as they define these qualities) is suffered to appear. O'Hara insists upon a hard literalness in his language which reminds one of the simple crystalline code of his characters. There is a roughness in O'Hara which may make the writer of sensibility feel like a dude. O'Hara's self-identification is obviously with the workman, with the average, with plain people. Or perhaps he feels himself to be a part of the majority, which is to say, of the crowd. Certainly he does not merely react against what he judges an incorrect definition of the individual; he hates it violently. And conceivably he hates it in himself. His view of sensibility or of an intricate and conceivably self-indulgent privacy is, like Hemingway's (in *The Sun Also Rises*, for instance), entirely negative. He sees the romantic Self with the eyes of the crowd. And the crowd is a leveller. The average it seeks is anything but Whitman's divine average.

THE ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUALISM of the Enlightenment has fallen. Contemporary writers like Brecht, or Beckett, or the Beats, and recently and most atrociously William Burroughs in his *Naked Lunch*, have repudiated it in a spirit of violence. Some have been violently comic at

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its expense, others ruthlessly nihilistic and vengeful. Among them there are some who gather unto themselves more and more and more power only to release it destructively on this already discredited and fallen individualism. In this they seem at times to imitate the great modern consolidations of power, to follow the example of parties and states and their scientific or military instruments. They act, in short, like those who hold the real power in society, the masters of the Leviathan. But this is only an imitation of the real power. Through this imitation they hope perhaps to show that they are not inferior to those who lead the modern world. Joint Chiefs or Pentagons have power to do as they will to huge populations. But there are writers who will not reckon themselves among these subordinate masses and who aim to demonstrate an independent power equal to the greatest. They therefore strike one sometimes as being extraordinarily eager to release their strength and violence against an enemy, and that enemy is the false conception of Self created by Christianity and by Christianity's successors in the Enlightenment. Modern literature is not satisfied simply to dismiss a romantic, outmoded conception of the Self. In a spirit of deepest vengefulness it curses it. It hates it. It rends it, annihilates it. It would rather have the maddest chaos it can invoke than a conception of life it has found false. But after this destruction, what?

I HAVE SPOKEN of complaint, stoicism, sensibility, and nihilistic rage, and I would like to touch now on recent American writers who have turned to comedy. It is obvious that modern comedy has to do with the disintegrating outline of the worthy and humane Self, the bourgeois hero of an earlier age. That sober, prudent person, the bourgeois, although he did much for the development of modern civilisation, built factories and railroads, dug canals, created sewage systems, and went colonising, was indicted for his shallowness and his ignoble and hypocritical ways. The Christian writer (see Dostoievsky's portrait of Luzhin in *Crime and Punishment*) and the revolutionary (see Mangan in Shaw's *Heartbreak House*) repudiated him and all his works. The First World War dealt a blow to his prestige from which it never recovered. Dada and surrealism raised a storm of laughter against him. In the movies René Clair and Charlie Chaplin found him out. He became the respectable little person, the gentlemanly tramp. Poets of the deepest subversive tendencies came on like bank clerks in ironic masquerade.

The trick is still good as J. P. Donleavy has lately shown in his novel *The Ginger Man*. His hero, Sebastian Dangerfield, a free-wheeling rascal and chaser, presents himself with wickedly comic effect as an ultra-respectable citizen with an excellent credit rating, one who doesn't know what it is to hock other people's property for the price of a drink, the gentlemanly sack-artist.

The private and inner life which was the subject of serious books until very recently now begins to have an antique and funny look. The earnestness of a Proust towards himself would seem old-fashioned to-day. Indeed, Italo Svevo, a contemporary of Proust, in *The Confessions of Zeno*, made introspection, hypochondria, and self-knowledge the subjects of his comedy. *My* welfare, *my* development, *my* advancement, *my* earnestness, *my* adjustment, *my* marriage, *my* family—all that will make the modern reader laugh heartily. Writers may not wholly agree with Bertrand Russell that "I" is no more than a grammatical expression, but they do consider certain claims of the "I" to be definitely funny. Already in the 19th century Stendhal became bored with the persistent "I-I-I" and denounced it in characteristic terms.

PERHAPS THE CHANGE that has occurred can be clearly illustrated by a comparison of Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* with Nabokov's *Lolita*. In both stories an older man is overcome by sexual desire for a younger person. With Mann, however, this sad occurrence involves Apollo and Dionysus. Gustave von Aschenbach, an overly civilised man, an individual estranged from his instincts which unexpectedly claim their revenge, has gone too far, has entered the realm of sickness and perversity and is carried away by the plague. This is a typically Nietzschean theme. But in *Lolita* the internal life of Humbert Humbert has become a joke. Far from being an Aschenbach, a great figure of European literature, he is a fourth- or fifth-rate man of the world and is unable to be entirely serious about his passion. As for Lolita's mother, the poor thing only makes him laugh when she falls in love with him—a banal woman. To a very considerable extent Humbert's judgment of her is based on the low level of her culture. Her banality makes her a proper victim. If her words about love and desire had not come out of a bin in which

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the great American public finds suitable expressions to describe its psychological and personal needs, she might have been taken more seriously. The earnestness of Mann about love and death might be centuries old. The same subject is sadly and maliciously comical in *Lolita*. Clare Quilty cannot be made to take even his own death seriously and while he is being murdered by Humbert, ridicules his own situation and Humbert's as well, losing at last a life that was not worth having anyway. The contemporary Aschenbach does not deny his desires, but then he is without the dignity of the old fellow and is always on the verge of absurdity. Wright Morris in his new novel *What a Way to Go* explicitly makes comedy of the *Death in Venice* theme. His American professors in Venice, discussing *Death in Venice* all the while, seem to feel that there is small hope for them. They decline to view themselves with full seriousness. They believe their day is over. They are unfit, and dismiss themselves with a joke.

We must carefully remind ourselves that, if so many people to-day exist to enjoy or deplore an individual life, it is because prodigious public organisations, scientific, industrial, and political, support huge populations of new individuals. These organisations both elicit and curtail private development. I myself am not convinced that there is less "selfhood" in the modern world. I am not sure anyone knows how to put the matter properly. I am simply recording the attitudes of modern writers, including contemporary Americans, who are convinced that the jig of the Self is up.

What is the modern Self in T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land?* It is the many, crossing the bridge in the great modern city, who do not know that death has already undone them; it is the "clerk carbuncular" taking sexual liberties of brief duration with the "lovely lady" who, after she has stooped to folly, puts a record on the gramophone. What is the Self for French novelists of the first post-war era like Louis Ferdinand Céline, or for writers like Curzio Malaparte or Albert Camus in the second post-war era? Man, in a book like *The Stranger*, is a creature neither fully primitive nor fully civilised, a Self devoid of depths. We have come a long way from Montaigne and his belief in a self-perfecting, self-knowing character.

Recent American comic novels like *Lolita*, or *The Ginger Man*, or Burt Blechman's *How Much?*, or Bruce Friedman's first novel *Stern* examine the private life. It is as if they were testing the saying of Socrates, that the unexamined life was not worth living. Apparently they find the examined life funny too. Some cannot find the life they are going to examine. The power of public life has become so vast and threatening that private life cannot maintain a pretence of its importance. Our condition of destructibility is ever-present in everyone's mind. Our submission seems required by public ugliness in our cities, by the public nonsense of television which threatens to turn our brains to farina within our heads, by even such trifling things as Muzak broadcasts in the elevators of public buildings. The Self is asked to prepare itself for sacrifice, and this is the situation reflected in contemporary American fiction.

As for the future, it cannot possibly shock us since we have already done everything possible to scandalise ourselves. We have so completely debunked the old idea of the Self that we can hardly continue in the same way. Perhaps some power within us will tell us what we are, now that old misconceptions have been laid low. Undeniably the human being is not what he commonly thought a century ago. The question nevertheless remains. He is something. What is he?

And this question, it seems to me, modern writers have answered poorly. They have told us, indignantly or nihilistically or comically, how great our error is, but for the rest they have offered us thin fare. The fact is that modern writers sin when they suppose that they *know*, as they conceive that physics *knows* or that history *knows*. The subject of the novelist is not knowable in any such way. The mystery increases, it does not grow less as types of literature wear out. It is, however, Symbolism or Realism or Sensibility wearing out, and not the mystery of mankind.

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Kingsley Amis

One Fat Englishman

From a new novel

"CONTICUERE OMNES," Roger was saying urgently to himself half an hour later, "*intentique ora tenebant. Inde toro pater Aeneas sic fatus ab alto: Infandum, regina, iubes renovare dolorem; sed* . . . No, it's . . . Hell: *colle sub aprico celeberrimus ilice lucus*. . . . Trouble with the damned stuff it's all chopped up into lengths so you have to know the beginning of every line and never get a clue out of what's gone before. Oh, God—*hic haec hoc hic-haec-hoc* yes yes yes now *hunc hanc hoc* three *huiuses* three *huics hoc hac hoc* right *hi hae ha*. . . . *Ha? Ha ha ha horum his his?* That can't be right, can it? No, of course, it's *haec*, you idiot. Get on with it—*hi hae haec* then straight on to the Greek irregulars *esthio* and good old *blosko-moloumai* yes now back to *hi hae haec hos has hos* three *horums*. . . ."

What Roger was saying to himself might have struck a casual observer, if one could have been contrived, as greatly at variance with what he was doing. In fact, however, the two were intimately linked. If he wanted to go on doing what he was doing for more than another ten seconds at the outside it was essential that he should go on saying things to himself—any old things as long as the supply of them could be kept up. Nothing else at hand suggested itself as a means of self-distraction. Very early in his career (he had only been troubled in this way a couple of times since then) he had found himself reading the better part of a chapter of Evelyn Waugh's book on Rossetti in this situation, rather to the puzzlement and, after a time, to the irritation of his companion, an Irish waitress from the considerably worse of the two local hotels. The episode had done nothing to alleviate his generally harsh view of pre-Raphaelite theory and practice, notably its religiose aspects.

His present difficulty with Helene was partly inherent in her, but could be traced more immediately to the prolonged bout of anticipation he had endured before she had rounded up the three children involved, dumped them at the zoo place and driven back to the house. Then there had been the moment when her usual policy of bodily self-effacement seemed to slip her mind and he was paid back twice over for everything he had missed the day by the swimming-pool. He found it hard to drive that out of his head, or to want to. Not the memory of seeing Arthur being got into the car, with a liberal helping hand from behind that brought him down on hands and knees, not even self-admiration at having managed Helene with such imagination and resource was any use to him. He kept having to fall back on this Latin and Greek and stuff.

All was very nearly lost when he found that *esthio* and *blosko*, though all right as far as they went, pointed nowhere much. He struggled half-way through the paradigm of *horao* with his mind becoming progressively blanker. "Oh, Jesus," his internal monologue continued, "whan that Aprill with his shoures sote the droght of March hath perced

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to the rote, and bathed every vein in swich licour, of which vertu engendred is the flour, then . . . then *whoops*—the weeping Pleiads wester and the moon is under seas; from bourne to bourne of midnight far sighs the rainy breeze. It sighs from a lost country to a land I have not known; the weeping Pleiads wester and . . . the moon is under seas, that's more like it, from bourne to bourne. . . ."

After the weeping Pleiads had made half a dozen circuits he found things beginning to get easier. His mind stopped behaving like a motor with a slipping clutch and gradually withdrew into itself. He saw nothing; there were sounds, but he heard them less and less. He lost all interest in where he was and who he was with, in any part or aspect of the future. For perhaps a minute, though he himself could not have known how long, he came as close as he had ever done to being unaware of who he was. Then the minute ended and he began taking notice of things again, including who he was with. The memory of how he had felt combined with elation at having done what he had been at such pains to do and induced him to give up more of his time to the final blandishments than he normally cared for. One of the really good ones, he thought.

Helene propped her head on her elbow and stared at him. She was flushed and tousled now all right. "It was nice for you, wasn't it?" she said with little enquiry.

"Of course, my dear, perfectly splendid, I assure you. Why, wasn't it nice for you?"

"Oh yes."

"Good."

"You get what you want quite a lot of the time, don't you?"

"I most certainly do not. Quite the contrary, in fact. Whatever gave you that idea? If I got a bit more of what I wanted I might be rather easier to handle."

"Oh, so you know you're not easy to handle?"

"Of course. Demonstrably I'm not."

"Why do you want to do this so much?"

"What, this? Is that a mystery? You're absolutely simply and unequivocally the most attractive woman I've ever laid eyes on, let alone managed to get my ——"

"That's good to hear, honey, but I didn't mean with me personally, I meant with everybody. That's who you really want, isn't it? Everybody?"

"Fortunately, perhaps, there are certain immutable limitations in the structure of things which render the consummation of any such ambition beyond one's grasp."

"Sure, sure, old thing, but it is everybody you want, isn't it?"

"God, I don't know. It's possible, I suppose. But then I've never managed to have anybody I really wanted for long enough, you see. If I did I might turn out to be much better about wanting everybody. I don't know."

"What about your wives? Didn't you really want them? Or did you not have them for long enough?"

"Christ, it certainly wasn't that. A total of twelve years, thanks most awfully. No, I imagine I must not really have wanted them. I certainly thought I did when I started off, got to admit that. That's one of the snags."

"What is?" She had the sheet wrapped half round her, tucked neatly under her armpits. Her tanned skin looked nice against it, but Roger could think of nicer alternative arrangements without having to rack his brains.

"Well," he said, "it's such a long time between getting hold of somebody and finding out if you really wanted them in the first place. Like love at first sight. You can only tell if that's happened by what happens afterwards."

"Oh, maybe, but we're getting away from the subject. What is it about women that makes you want them? And please, no biology lesson."

"Well, I think it's all most frightfully obscure really." Roger did not go on to try to describe how he had felt for that minute or so just now, because it failed to cross his mind. He was no better than the next man at remembering, or at knowing, why he did things. He had lied to Helene. Whether or not his motives about women were obscure,

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he did not think they were. A man's sexual aim, he had often said to himself, is to convert a creature who is cool, dry, calm, articulate, independent, purposeful into a creature that is the opposite of these; to demonstrate to an animal which is pretending not to be an animal that it is an animal. But it seemed a good moment to keep quiet about all that. "What would you say?" he asked after a short pause. "A way of getting to know someone better than you can in any other way? That sort of thing?"

"Is that how you think of it?"

"Why so surprised? Don't a lot of people view it in that kind of way?"

"I guess so, it's just that somehow I shouldn't have expected. . . ."

"What?"

"Roger, do you mind if I ask you a personal question?"

"Not in the very least. This is a fairly personal occasion."

"Why are you so awful?"

"Yes, I used to ask myself that quite a lot. Not so much of late, however. Well, I think a frightful lot of it's tied up with being a snob, you know. Very *angst*-producing business, being a snob. No time to relax and take things easy. You have to be on duty all the time, as it were."

"Oh, you know you're a snob, too?"

"As before, it's demonstrable."

"I never knew you knew things like that about yourself."

"You've never asked me."

"No. Look, why aren't you awful now? To-day you haven't been awful once."

"I don't feel awful. I've no reason to feel awful. How could I be awful with you near me looking like that?" He leaned over and kissed her.

"What was that for?"

"For? You're looking surprised again."

"You're noticing me."

"Oh? Don't I usually?"

"I was expecting you to be really awful, a real son of a bitch, when I told you I'd loused up getting rid of Arthur. . . ."

"I've explained about that."

". . . and I half thought, I more than half thought you'd chew me out when I asked you about being awful just now. Why didn't you? I don't know how I had the courage to——"

"Because I really want you and I've got you. For an hour or so, anyway."

"Oh, darling, do you really?"

"Of course, didn't I make that clear?"

"When?"

"Well, just now. You know."

"Oh. Oh, yes. Tell me more about being a snob. What sort of started you off on it?"

"That's easy, it was my father, no question about that. I'm not going to go into any of that Oedipus piffle but I really detested the bastard. He was a mean, vulgar, stupid little man who spent his evenings drinking beer and listening to variety programmes on the wireless and never noticed what he ate or wore or——"

"Take it easy, I suppose he'd come up the hard way and never——"

"Hard way, my God you should have seen it. Hard way indeed. No little sod ever had it easier. He didn't make the money. It was his father who'd done that. Magnificent old boy. Screwed a quarter of a million quid out of the peasantry in twenty years by flogging them bloody awful crockery and glassware as he called it. Learnt to drink claret and fish salmon and ride to hounds and adored it all. Fell down dead at eighty when he was out with his gun. No, my esteemed parent was a member of the upper classes, went to school at Charterhouse—Berkhamsted was good enough for me, he thought—and Captain of Boats at Magdalen, what? and then nothing. Doing anything was what the lower classes did. So was caring about anything. You mustn't have pictures in your house, because parvenus do that. So he sold my grandfather's Courbets and Delacroixs and bought a racing car of some sort. He couldn't drive it but he liked to know it was there. He didn't marry a debutante—night-club owners and toy-balloon manufacturers do that. So he married the girl who answered the telephone at his solicitors. He saw quite a lot of them because there were some things that had to be done and he made them do them all."

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"PERHAPS I shouldn't say any of this," he went on after a moment, "but I've got to blame someone for what I'm like, haven't I?" Helene was gazing at him. He reached for the top of the sheet that covered her and her hands went there too for a moment, then released it. He pulled it away. There was an interval before he continued: "Will you come away with me next week-end? To New York. Or anywhere you like."

She was silent for so long that he suspected sleep or the feigning thereof, but finally her voice came from above his head: "Do you really want me to?"

"Of course I do."

"You know, I think I might just manage it. I do believe I might just swing it. I have an aunt in Cincinnati."

"Have you really?"

"Well, I did ten years ago. There's Arthur, though."

"So there is."

"But then I've done a lot for Sue Green recently and she felt bad about to-day. But then why can't Arthur go to Cincinnati?"

"Your aunt's very eccentric. She doesn't like children."

"Well, it's more she's a little feeble and frail. Be asking a lot to expect her to put up with someone like Arthur."

"Yes, it would, wouldn't it?"

"You never had any children, did you, Roger?"

"Darling, I wish you'd give these ghastly American idioms a rest. The way you put it makes me sound ninety years old or dead. No, I have never had any children. The question has simply never arisen."

"I guess not. All right, where can I call you when I've fixed things?"

"You've got my New York number."

"Do I? You better give it to me again."

"I've given it you before."

"Never mind. Give it to me again."

"Shall I?"

"Why don't you?"

"I suppose I could."

"If you tried. Oh, Roger."

"I love you, Helene."

"We mustn't be too long."

In the Bangs' bedroom next door the telephone rang, or rather set up its puny jangle. Helene sprang out of bed. "I have to answer it."

"Nonsense, my sweet, let it ring."

"No, you never know, it's no good."

ROGER LAY BACK and began to luxuriate slightly. But now it appeared to him that his behaviour to Helene over the last half-hour or so was a masterly feat of conscious policy, all of it successfully directed at getting her to come away with him in a week's time. He was too old a hand to exult prematurely—no roars of triumph until he bolted the door after them in the apartment bedroom—but conservative appraisal now put the chances at about sixty to forty in his favour, a miraculous recovery after the fifty-to-one-against assessable this morning. Hearing her voice on the telephone in the next room brought an unwelcome reminder of the small hours, and he even wondered momentarily whether he had done as much for her as Ernst had. But of course he must have done. The energy he had expended guaranteed that.

She reappeared now in the doorway, smoothing her hair back. In this attitude she looked as if she had recently grown a little in certain respects, which was remarkable. She said: "It's for you."

"For me? Who the devil wants me?"

"He wouldn't give his name. Just a friend, he said."

"A friend? Well, that certainly narrows it down."

"Don't be long."

"You can rely on me."

"I know."

First carefully wrapping a sheet round himself, he went and picked up the telephone. "Micheldene."

"Mr. Micheldene?" The voice was American and so gave no clue.

"Micheldene."

"Mr. Micheldene, I'm glad to have reached you. I called to enquire after your health."

"Who are you?"

"Not your physical health, you understand,

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though I certainly trust that this continues satisfactory. I should like you to tell me how in your own personal view you rate your spiritual health as of this moment."

Roger pulled his gaze away from the top of a nearby dressing-table on which, among pots and tubes and bottles of female stuff, he could see a man's necktie, neatly rolled up, and an empty plastic case of the kind used to transport electric razors. "Whoever you are," he said loudly, "my spiritual health, like my genital and excretory health, is no concern of yours. Now just you——"

"Permit me to correct you, sir. As a priest of your Church your spiritual health is of peculiar and immediate moment to me. This is Father Colgate speaking. If you recall, the last time we made personal contact I expressed myself as having detected in you the infallible signs of a soul at variance with God. And now from the very tone of your voice over this telephone wire I find myself inescapably drawn towards the same conclusion. The unrest of a soul at variance with. . . ."

Most of this passed Roger by. The reason he had not cut it short at once was that he had suddenly become very interested in the sound of a motor engine approaching the far side of the house. It stopped. There was the clumping noise of a door, followed by footsteps. He put the handset down next to the telephone and ran out. In the passage there was a traditional moment when he and Helene, coming the other way, dodged and jostled like wrestlers, then he was in his own room snatching on clothes. The front-door buzzer buzzed, restoring perhaps a third of his calm, but he went on dressing while Helene's footsteps receded and paused. When he heard them returning unaccompanied he sat down on the bed in shirt, trousers, and socks.

Helene came in wearing her housecoat and a pair of gold slippers and carrying a large fat envelope. "It's for you," she said. "Special delivery. But don't——"

"What? Has everybody gone mad?"

"Don't open it now—wait till I have to go fetch Arthur."

"What next? Chap driving a herd of cattle into the garden and saying they're for. . . ."

He stopped speaking as he uncovered and recognised his lecture material and unfolded a note that read:

Dear Mr. Micheldene:

I took a look through some of this (hope you don't mind) and found it pretty interesting. It's quite an industry, isn't it? Not for me, though.

I guess I owe you an apology for not telling you ahead of time what I was going to do, but then that would have ruined the whole idea. I'm sure you understand.

Sincerely,
Irving Macher

PS: Watch out for Treatment #2!

"What's the matter?" Helene asked.

"Nothing. Excuse me a minute."

He took a notebook from the breast pocket of his coat and went back to the telephone, which to his surprise was still talking with all its old authority.

". . . process of education in remorse," it said. "But first, the freshman programme: horror, grief, and fear. And there are no grades, my son. Here's one course of study where it takes no more than a heart honestly desiring to know——"

Roger spoke three words into the mouthpiece, of which two were "the Pope," rang off hard, looked through his notebook and dialled.

AT HIS SHOULDER, Helene said: "Who are you calling? What's this all about?"

Without turning or speaking he passed the contents of the envelope up to her. Then he said: "Oh, good afternoon. May I speak to Professor Parrish, please? Oh, could you tell me where I might reach him? Have you the number? Thank you, I'll try there."

Helene tried several times to break in during this and while he re-dialled and he had to shake his head and make beating-off motions with his left arm to prevent her. Finally she got in with: "This is this lecture of yours, right?"

"Yes, yes, and Macher stole it. Fellow's a raving lunatic and I'm going to do something about . . . Hallo, Budweiser College? The library, please."

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"But what can you do about it now, honey? Why does it have to be now? And anyway, wouldn't you do better to hold it until you've calmed down?"

He stared at her. "I don't want to calm down. —Hallo, Professor Parrish, please. Well, could you go and see? Yes, of course."

"Roger, look now."

"Yes?"

"Isn't this what we called you being awful?"

"Yes, perhaps it is, but I'm afraid in the present situation that's neither here nor there."

"The present situation? That's interesting. What is the present situation as you see it?"

"Helene, dear, I'm not telling you to mind your own business, believe me, but you must recognise that this is a private matter between myself and this . . . Jewish paranoiac. I'm sorry, but——"

"If it's between the two of you why are you bringing Parrish into it?"

"Kindly allow me to be the judge of——"

"Will you listen to me, Roger?"

"What is it?"

"We have about ten minutes at the outside before I have to go fetch Arthur. I shouldn't really have——"

"Hallo, yes? —All right, darling, see you later, then. —Are you sure? Bock 22? Would you put me back to the switchboard, then? Thank you."

"At least you're convinced it wasn't Arthur now."

"Just half a second, my dear, will you? —Switchboard? Bock 22, please."

The bedroom door slammed. Roger made the beginnings of a movement towards it, then turned away and said into the telephone: "English office? Professor Parrish, please. I don't care if you're the State Governor, I want to speak to Professor Parrish."

It took several minutes for Roger to be convinced that he was not going to be able to do that. By the time he got back to his bedroom Helene and her clothes had gone, and almost at once he heard her drive away.

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Epigrams to a critic who counselled the poets of the university to write in traditional forms of verse

You suggest we write a sonnet
And make our beloved wear
A decasyllabic bonnet
To confine her wind-tossed hair.

A professor who has published well
Advised the poets of the school
To write in dactyls or in ding-dong verse:
Why put new pennies in a worn out purse?

Sol Biderman

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G. Rattray Taylor

The Age of the Androids

SCIENCE FICTION increasingly features a class of beings known as "Androids"—logical descendants of Frankenstein's monster and the robots of Čapek. The Android may or may not be human in appearance, but differs from his literary forebears in being of phenomenal skill, intelligence, and memory capacity. It is human feeling which he (it?) usually lacks, though in a few instances even this is described as being accurately simulated. The Android is sometimes depicted as having been produced by biologists, who have fostered the development of living material without being able to endow it with soul and feeling, but often it is simply a sophisticated mechanism of steel, rubber, and electronics assembled in quasi-human form.

If science fiction expresses the anxieties evoked in the popular mind by the progress of science, as it is often claimed, then the Android represents an intelligent guess at where people fear that current developments in simulating human skill and behaviour are leading. And in the last two or three years the Android has come to seem much less unlikely than it once did. In a score of laboratories scientists are building machines which will simulate various aspects of human behaviour with uncanny verisimilitude: machines which will read, write, translate, listen, speak, or forge a signature. IBM's "Shoebox" recently figured in the press, after having been flown to London for a B.B.C. television programme: when spoken to distinctly, it operates an adding machine. Its current vocabulary is the ten digits and four command words, but its makers hope for a vocabulary of several thousand words within a year or two, and then we shall be getting pretty near the "voice-typewriter" which will type letters as dictated.

The development which has set in motion this whole attempt to ape, or actually outstrip, human behaviour, is of course the invention of electronic computers—devices originally conceived as rapid adding machines, but already proving capable of unexpected subtleties of behaviour. From the view that computers can do nothing very interesting public opinion has swung to half-believing that they can do anything. Jokes about computers, originally a feature of the *New Yorker*, now appear in much more mundane papers. In them computers appear in increasingly god-like roles. The trend is shown by two jokes: in the first, the computer simply prints out *"Cogito, ergo sum."* More recently, the story goes, the Vatican's computer was fed all the information in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. When all had been absorbed, it was asked: "Is there a God?" After only a moment's consideration, it replied: "There is now." Computers are not as infallible as the deity, however; the cutting I found clipped up on a good many computer men's desks, when I travelled around to talk to them, showed a man looking in amazement at a vast computer and saying: "It would take 5,000 mathematicians 4,000 years to make a mistake like that!"

The truth lies between these extremes, of course, and just where it lies is worth careful defining.

COMPUTERS ARE BASICALLY adding machines, sure enough, but they differ from the familiar office machine in two important respects: first, they possess relatively large memories. This alone would make them valuable: to be able to produce, in a split second, any item of information about the stock, the earnings of employees, and the like, is far beyond the capacity of an ordinary filing system, even when punched cards are used. The second is that they can be pro-

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vided with a "programme"—that is, a long series of instructions which they will follow out in sequence, without further human intervention, going back to the memory stores repeatedly for further data, as needed. An interim result can be put back into the memory and later brought out and compared with a subsequent result. Later steps in the programme may be made to depend on these earlier results. (Thus the programme might run: If the second result is bigger than the first, proceed thus and thus; if smaller, proceed in such and such a manner.)

A computer, therefore, can be used to sort things into order, according to any preconceived set of rules. In a typical application, a computer is employed to determine how steel billets can most economically be cut up so as to meet orders for slabs of steel of various lengths. One can imagine how one might do this without a computer. One might take a number of bits of wood, scaled to the lengths of the steel slabs ordered, and place them end to end in various ways, noting how much material was wasted by each combination. Finally, when every conceivable combination had been examined, one would pick the one which wasted least. Such a process of trial and error would take hours or days. A computer could do it in a few seconds. This is the third great difference between electronic computers and earlier adding machines: their fantastic speed of operation.

One way to put this in perspective may be to say that, whereas a man in orbit is travelling about five thousand times faster than a man can walk—this being man's greatest achievement in accelerating human travel so far—a computer can calculate at least one *million* times faster than a man with paper and pencil. Some years ago, a computer was employed to retrace the history of the sun, by pursuing a series of calculations devised by Professor Fred Hoyle: it took some 500 hours to produce the result, but it would have taken a human mathematician several hundred years. And modern computers are much faster than that: a modern computer can do in about 10 seconds work which would take a human clerk a year.

This means that computers can be used for calculations which simply would not be worth attempting by ordinary means, because the result would no longer be of interest when it was obtained. Computers, for instance, can be used to integrate signals from a satellite or missile, so as to determine where it is and hence correct the course, almost immediately. Where a missile flight lasts a few minutes, a result which takes half an hour to produce is obviously useless, one arrived at in micro-seconds may be invaluable.

THE CURRENT achievements of computers, commercially available and working outside specialised computer design laboratories, are based on these rather straightforward capacities. At Prestwick Airport, a computer brings planes in from across the Atlantic, balancing alternative flight-paths, runway availabilities, fuel reserves, and the like, to produce the most efficient result. In Chicago, every crime goes into the capacious memory of a computer, which can sometimes predict where the next crime in a series will occur, by analysing the preferred modes of action of different criminals; as its memory fills up with data over a period of years it should grow increasingly efficient at this. Computers are working out time-tables for British Railways, and calculating the best way of using dock-space and available cranes to speed up ship-turn-round.

The discovery that every writer uses words with relative frequencies which are characteristic of him to the point where they identify him like a finger-print, can be used to verify the authenticity of disputed works. The Rev. Andrew Morton has thus analysed the works attributed to St. Paul, with the aid of the computer at Birkbeck College in London, and has shown that the only genuine works in the Pauline Corpus are Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans.[1] The remainder, he says, with the wisdom of hindsight, are "pretty poor stuff." In them, four hands can be detected. Similar techniques have been applied to parts of the Dead Sea Scrolls, to St. John's Gospel, to the "Federalist Papers" of Hamilton, Madison and Jay, but not, as far as I know, to the disputed plays of Shakespeare, oddly enough.

It is not the "five-dollar words" which identify a writer, but his use of simple things like particles and conjunctions. The way nouns are used also falls into certain patterns.[2] Provided his vocabulary exceeds two hundred words, a writer can be identified by such means as decisively as by a finger-print, and literary forgery is no longer a possibility.

[1] If Galatians are accepted as being by St. Paul.

[2] Writers should be interested in Udny Yule's *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary* (1944).

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None of this, ingenious though it be, would justify the description of computers as "electronic brains" or the fear that one day they might come to dominate their masters. The really radical thing about computers, the thing which puts them in a fundamentally different class from anything man has built before, is their ability to learn, and so to arrive at patterns of behaviour unforeseen by the man who programmes them. Work on computer-learning has up to now been done chiefly by instructing them how to play games. This is because games have clearly-defined rules and objects, which can be expressed in computer programmes without great difficulty, and several of them lie within the capacities of existing computers.

Perhaps the simplest such game is noughts-and-crosses (tick-tack-toe, in the U.S.). As most people know, if the player who starts places his first cross in the central space, he need not be defeated. A computer can be programmed to store the results of a long series of games, and the moves made, and after each one to survey all the games and to prefer subsequently the moves which have most frequently resulted in wins. It will soon discover that if it picks the centre square to open with, it will win more often than if it picks any other square. It will soon discover that crosses placed in corner positions offer advantages. It will discover that when its opponent has two noughts in a row, it always loses if it does not take the remaining space in the row. It makes these discoveries substantially in the manner that you or I make them: by looking at a lot of results and noting which ones pay off. Unless therefore we define the word "learn" in a very narrow way, we are bound to speak of these machines learning, though to many people the thought is abhorrent.

Computers learn to play a good game of draughts, as Dr. A. Samuels, a research director for IBM, has shown. His computer now beats him more often than not, and never makes the occasional stupid slip which Dr. Samuel is liable to make when tired. He does not himself know why it chooses certain lines of play. Chess, however, has such complex moves that even a computer cannot work through all the possible combinations of moves more than about four moves ahead. (This enables it to beat poor players only.) What currently intrigues computer men is how the human brain plans its chess moves. By an extension of this approach, computers can be made to play any kind of contest for which rules can be written. Much of the money going into this kind of research comes from the wish to make them play war-games.

Basically, what computers are doing in such operations, is writing their own programmes. They are, in fact, programmed to write their own programme. This is why the assertion that computers can only do what they are told to do, though true, is misleading.

Actually, if war broke out next year, where computers, in the current state of the art, would be most likely to find their most useful application would be in deciding between distribution of resources. It was calculated after World War II that "the U.S. bomber-building programme caused more disruption to the American economy than the bombs which U.S. bombers dropped caused to the German economy...." To examine every combination of ways of using resources is just what computers enjoy.

Recently in Britain, the Co-operative Wholesale Society applied a computer to considering the running of a farm. It chose for the purpose one of its most efficient farms. The computer was told the acreage of the farm, the productivity of each field for given amounts of fertiliser, the wage rates of the employees, the current selling price of the various products, how much grass or fodder livestock consume, etc. It then considered every alternative way of using the resources—so many acres for wheat, so many for silage, so many for grazing, with all the implications for manpower, capital charges, etc—until it arrived at the most profitable combination. After all the changes recommended by the computer had been made, profits rose some 30 per cent.

In general, business concerns, however, have been slow to apply computers to considering the whole balance of their activities, partly, no doubt, owing to the difficulty of assigning values to some of the factors involved. Meanwhile, computer theoreticians, such as Professor D. W. Phillips of the London School of Economics, are trying to construct mathematical models of the whole British economy, for computer study, and talk with some confidence of the day when the balancing of the budget will be done by computers "and the Chancellor of the Exchequer can be pensioned off...."

The notion of a computer embodying a "model" of a process to be studied is a key one. A simple instance is provided by a bridge made

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of metal trusses. Well-established methods for calculating the stresses and strains on each member, when a given weight is placed at any point have existed for years. The computer brings a new dimension to such studies. It can be told to assume a vehicle of stated weight is on the bridge, at successive points a foot apart, and to calculate all stresses and strains. It can be told to revert to the beginning and assume the weight of the vehicle is increased 5 per cent. It can be told the breaking strains of the various members, and instructed to keep on increasing the load until the strain in any member passes the breaking-point. In this way a bridge design can be tested to destruction without the bridge ever being built. New aircraft are now commonly tested in this way and London's road flyover at Hammersmith was designed on a Ferranti *Pegasus* computer.

One of the things which computers can do efficiently is design other computers, calculating the most efficient lay-out of components and distribution of resources between the various parts. The eminent mathematician John von Neumann showed theoretically that, above a certain size limit, it is possible for a computer to design a better computer than itself. This size limit has not yet been reached, but computer men look forward eagerly to the infinite series of improvements which would then become possible.

Computers and the Brain

SUCH DEVELOPMENTS put the computer far outside the adding machine category and give rise to the sobriquet "electronic brains." Before considering whether such activities deserve to be called "thinking" let me point out how far computers resemble human brains in structure.

The human brain does in fact work by methods of the same general character as those by which computers work.[3] Actually, computers are of two main types, known as "digital" and "analogue." The difference is approximately that between a mechanical calculating machine and a slide-rule. In the former, units are counted off and totals reached with complete accuracy. In the latter, a number of electric currents, representing factors to be studied, and varying in some significant manner, can be combined to produce a new current, representing the outcome of all the forces at work. In complex situations, and where an exact numerical result is not required, the result may be a great gain in speed and simplicity of operation. When computers are talked about, it is usually digital ones which are meant unless otherwise specified; they have a wider range of applications, though analogue computers offer advantages for certain specialised tasks. One or two computers embodying both techniques have recently appeared on the market, an interesting development in view of the fact that the human brain also combines both approaches.

Like a digital computer, the brain consists of a large number of interconnected units, capable of one simple function—transmitting a current or not transmitting it. (This is why they are often compared with an abacus, on which everything is achieved by one basic operation: shifting a ball from one side of the frame to the other.) The differences are numerous. To name some: (1) A computer may contain some 5,000 units; the brain contains 100 million. In fact, it consists of no fewer than four computer-like systems which are inter-connected, but which are anatomically and functionally quite distinct.

(2) In a computer, each unit is connected to two others; in the brain a hundred connections is common, a thousand is not uncommon, and in certain cases (the Purkinje cells of the cerebellum) the figure rises to a quarter of a million. The brain cell sums all the inputs it receives before deciding whether to transmit a signal itself. And in doing so, it does not treat them all as being equivalent. The point on the cell body at which the connections arrive makes a big difference, so that some signals are given greater importance than others.

(3) The brain is bathed in fluids which can raise or lower the "firing threshold" of whole blocks of cells, or even of the whole brain. This is why certain drugs affect the brain, when they reach it via the bloodstream or by any other route. The brain even has cells specialised to produce its own regulating fluids. Digital computers, of course, lack anything of the kind. This gives the brain characteristics resembling those of an analogue, rather than a digital, computer.

(4) The memory of a computer is normally cleared after a run, and it starts each new task afresh. The brain goes on accumulating information all its life, and can use any bit of in-

[3] The parallel has recently been explored by Dr F. H. George, *The Brain as a Computer* (London, 1962).

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formation in tackling any problem; the methods by which it judges relevance remain completely mysterious. The capacity of human memory exceeds that of the machine quite prodigiously. It has been estimated that "if all the information in an adult human brain were printed on magnetic tape by the codes currently used, an area of tape equivalent to the entire surface of the earth would have to be employed. . . ."

(5) It is believed that the brain not only wires itself initially, but that it can re-wire itself to a considerable extent during life, and thus meet changing demands. Current computers, except in quite a primitive way, lack this flexibility. The brain, moreover, is bilaterally symmetrical —it consists of twin-systems, and their interlocking is not really understood.

COULD MORE BRAIN-LIKE COMPUTERS be built? Computer design specialists fall into two groups. The first group replies: "Why try? We have plenty of human brains already and they are much cheaper than computers to produce." (And are made by unskilled labour, the humorists add.) The point about computers is that they can do things the brain *can't* do. The thing is to develop these aspects—their speed and accuracy—to the limits.

It is an interesting speculation what the limits are. Developments in speed have reached the point where the time taken by electrical signals to pass from one part of the machine to another has become a limiting factor: calculations are delayed while figures are plucked from the memory banks. At the last computer exhibition one firm was proudly announcing that a figure could be put into store—using the latest methods—and taken out again in the time it took light to cross their exhibition stand: about 20 thousand-millionths of a second. Now that designers have to think in terms of such minute fragments of time, they have had to coin a new unit, the "nano-second," for one thousand-millionth of a second. The "pico-second" (one millionth of a millionth) has been proposed for the next stage. In a pico-second, light, or electricity for that matter, travels one-third of a millimetre, and as circuitry much smaller than this has been built, the unit is not fanciful. By techniques of extraordinary subtlety, involving the deposition of thin metallic films on crystals and the etching away of parts under a microscope, a batch of relays which would formerly have occupied about the volume of a football can now be packed in an area smaller than that occupied by a capital *M* on my typewriter.

It is the ancillary equipment which holds things up, and especially putting the data in and getting it out. Special xerographic printers have recently been designed which will print results at the almost unbelievable rate of 4,700 characters a second. When one watches the band of paper, about three feet across, spouting out of the machine covered with figures, it is hard to believe that they were not printed on it before the paper was rolled up. If these machines are stopped too abruptly, they are apt to burst into flame—one of the few visibly dramatic events in computer calculation.

Much ingenuity at present goes into harmonising the differently-paced sections of a computer, and providing "time-sharing" arrangements which enable the calculators to get on with something else while waiting for a bit of information to be fished out of one of the stores.

More romantically-inclined scientists, however, are fascinated by seeing how far computers can *imitate* human behaviour and in working towards machines which will *simulate* it—that is, achieve the result in the same manner the brain does. At University College, London, Dr. W. K. Taylor is building an "eye" of 400 photo-electric cells, and a specially designed "brain" in the hope that it will recognise shapes and perhaps even faces. Work of this kind is intended primarily to throw light on how the brain forms concepts. Taylor's colleague, Gordon Wilkins, is building a mechanical finger which learns by trial and error to point to a spot of light, wherever it may appear within the prescribed field of view. The method by which it learns is consciously modelled on that believed to be employed by the human brain.

Gordon Pask, a romantic of the deepest dye, has built a computer-like device named EUCRATES which can teach several similar computers what it has learned. Built into them are traits such as "persistence" and "forgetfulness," which can be adjusted so as to explore the best methods of teaching in different circumstances.

THE CONCEPT OF A COMPUTER which can modify its own internal wiring to cope with the effects of damage or of changed external requirements is one which promises an almost immediate practical advantage: computers placed in satellites cannot afford to fail because a few com-

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ponents have passed out. And at the commercial level, a computer which could adapt itself to the precise requirements of different kinds of calculations would be useful. Pask has been working on this, using the old principle of the lead-tree which grows in a lead solution—a common Victorian parlour trick. The threads of lead form where the current is strongest and dissolve away again when the load vanishes.

Finally, the size of computers is being rapidly reduced. Computers the size of an orange have been built to control missiles, and computers capable of normal arithmetical operations can now be fitted into a pack the size of 20 cigarettes.

While the computer is thus becoming steadily more brain-like, science is also working to equip it with the organs of sense which will free it from dependence on punched tape or typewritten inputs.

Artificial Senses

THE DRIVE to equip computers with sight and hearing is strong, because of the time wasted in feeding even existing models with data. The most urgent thing, of course, is to enable computers to read printed matter, and this problem has now been solved. A few months ago in Rockville, Maryland, in a lofty-hangar-like factory, I saw a reading-device nicknamed THE BRUTE which reads addressograph plates at 12,000 words a minute (equivalent to reading a novel in seven minutes). This is comparatively slow, because the machine is specifically designed to read very old, worn plates, and when it meets a damaged, displaced, or obscure letter it wastes a millisecond subjecting it to an elaborate series of tests on the basis of which it decides the most probable interpretation. In the same factory I saw the DEMON, a machine about five times as fast, designed to read railway invoices. It could read a novel in about 70 seconds, if the pages could be turned that fast. (Actually it is shifting the paper which is the limiting factor at the moment in reading devices. Reading speeds of 20,000 characters a *second* are already practical.) Reading machines are already on the market, including one which turns the text immediately into punched tape to be fed to a standard computer (cost about £45,000). This time-wasting conversion will eventually become unnecessary, of course.

The U.S. Army would also like them to be able to read handwriting, since many documents—such as those concerning a man's dependents—are likely to be filled-in in field conditions where only pen or pencil is available. Though considerably more difficult to achieve than reading type, Murray Eden at MIT seems to have cracked the central problem. He has shown that all handwriting can be represented by three relatively simple equations which express such things as the height and width of loops. Using an advanced research computer, the TX. 0, his programme successfully analyses handwriting and can then duplicate it.

To equip computers with humanoid effector organs is less urgent. The immediately-foreseen application of computer control is to run industrial processes, and machines can be switched on, or slowed down, by electrical impulses without much difficulty. The motive for producing effective devices which simulate the human hand and arm comes from the atomic energy field, where robots have been built to handle radioactive materials. The crucial problem is to give them a sense of the resistance offered to their movements. A robot without any such "feedback" would tear the handle off a door in trying to swing it open, being unable to foresee the exact path the door-knob must follow, and it would certainly be unwise to shake hands with one. But the General Electric Co. of Schenectady have built a device known as HANDYMAN which displays the necessary sensitivity. It can even twirl a hula-hoop, an action which involves feeling the "pull" of the hoop and timing the impulses to fit it. Among other awed spectators, I saw it pick up a small girl from the floor and gently put her down again. The pre-feedback-type robot would have probably hurled her through the roof and crushed her hands to pulp in doing so. HANDYMAN's designer has plans for a military robot of vaguely human appearance about 40 feet high, which will not only be "able to wade rivers and crawl through swamps but even swing from tree to tree...." Such devices are not yet operated by computers, but to connect the two is not a major problem and at the level of laboratory demonstration it has already been done.

THERE IS ONE MORE HUMAN SKILL which an Android could hardly do without: speech. While a computer can easily be made to play one of a number of prepared tape-recordings, giving it a vocabulary of stereotyped remarks,

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the size of which would be sharply limited by bulk and cost, real speech would have to be synthesised in some manner comparable to human speech. There has been a good deal of work on this—initiated in the first instance by the British Post Office, which saw a possible transmission economy in sending only the basic speech components over the wire and reassembling them at the other end. Quite readily intelligible speech can now be synthesised, although certain unusual sounds (such as the curious sound, produced by sucking in the breath, known as the "Kaffir click") still present difficulties, but the task of getting a computer to express its conclusions in words has not even been attempted. Computers do, of course, type out standard pre-arranged phrases, but this, like the battery of tape-recordings, is a very different proposition.

Artificial Intelligence

THE URGENT QUESTION is: how "intelligent" can computers become?[4] Will they ever be able to write symphonies, devise cosmologies, or (as was recently hopefully suggested) conduct psycho-analyses? The stock answer to this is that they can already do anything for which rules can be written, and so the next step is up to the rule-writers. Computer-translation is certainly held up by the fact that existing grammatical and syntactical rules turn out to be wholly inadequate to describe the structure of sentences unambiguously, and bodies such as the Language Research Unit at Cambridge see, not without satisfaction, fifty years' work ahead exploring this terrain. Other activities are in still worse case.

However, this answer obscures the issue, as can be seen from these cases where attempts have been made to programme computers to produce music or poetry. The method employed consists in instructing the computer to select a word at random from its vocabulary (or a note, in the case of music); then select another word, and test it by various criteria. Thus if the first word selected is the noun HAMMER, the second word should be a verb, and only verbs like STRIKE, FALLS, etc., are acceptable; verbs like SINGS, CREATES, or EATS are to be rejected.

The computer then selects a third word, and so on. Special rules govern the insertion of particles, the agreement of adjectives with nouns, etc. One specimen of this kind of thing, produced in California, ran as follows:

Few fingers go like narrow laughs
An ear won't keep few fishes,
Who is that rose in that blind house?
And all slim, gracious blind planes are coming,
They cry badly along a rose,
To leap is stuffy, to crawl was tender.

It was derived from a 3,500-word vocabulary and 128 syntactical patterns. As poetry, or even prose, it is of course simply babble. Music "composed" in this way sounds vaguely like that of the composer whom the computer programmer happened to study when evolving his rules, but is meaningless and noticeably lacks any form or sense of progression to a climax. The *Illiac Suite*, composed in a number of musical styles at the University of Illinois at Urbana by a computer known as ILLIAC, has achieved the imprimatur of broadcast and gramophone recording; however, it cannot be listened to more than about twice—in my private opinion—without inducing exasperation.

LET US FORGET THESE absurd attempts to run before one can crawl, and seriously consider the question of how brain-like man-made mechanisms might one day become. The problem can perhaps be reduced to three heads.

(1) The brain has a much vaster *memory* than the computer, and this memory is fed with masses of information daily for twenty years or more before it is capable of generating adult behaviour (and even then the behaviour may not be very bright). This information is partly deliberately chosen, partly the chance result of various environments and experiences. Computers, of course, are fed for a few minutes only with chosen information and the record is wiped clean from time to time.

Existing computer memories are in point of fact incapable of holding anything like the amount of information held by the brain, by a factor of several orders of magnitude, and maybe by much more. However this is a technical problem, and progress is rapid. In fifty years the construction of computer memories comparable with, or better than, the human, can, I think, be confidently expected. Moreover,

[4] See M. Minsky, *Steps Towards Artificial Intelligence*, Proc. I.R.E., January, 1961, pp. 8–30. For a very useful bibliography (about 600 titles) see Minsky, "A Selected Descriptor-Indexed Bibliography to the Literature on Artificial Intelligence" in *I.R.E. Transactions on Human Factors in Electronics* (1961), *pp.* 39–55.

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computers can be fed with the information in other computers, so that the education of a new computer could be completed far more rapidly than the education of a human being. And since they are potentially immortal, one can count on the eventual appearance of computers with far more information at their disposal than any single human being could hope for.

This year, indeed, tests of telephone lines have been made to see if they can be utilised for mutual consultation between computers. (Many European lines were found to have quality standards inadequate for this purpose, a fact which the several authorities are still seeking to conceal.)

(2) The brain does not simply store digits, it forms *concepts*. If computers could do the same, we could *really* begin to talk about artificial intelligence. The problem is being very actively attacked; the computing device which (as I mentioned) W. K. Taylor is constructing is a case in point. At the same time, we are beginning to get an inkling of how the human brain handles concepts. And at Harvard Medical School last year, two physiologists, Hubel and Wiesel, did show the character of the brain-cell arrangements involved in abstracting notions like "triangularity."[5] This is really the first time that anyone had pin-pointed anything which could be regarded as concept-formation at the neuronal level, and the work has caused quite a stir in the specialised world of those who follow such matters. However, it must be added that the sophistication of the human brain is far beyond the present ambitions of computer builders. To recognise a woman at different angles, in different lights, in different clothes, and perhaps with a different hair-do, involves a series of abstractions, selections, and comparisons with past experience of the effect of such factors, which will take a good deal of imitating. One can't therefore be quite as confident that computers will one day equal or surpass man in concept-forming ability as one can about memory, since the trick hasn't yet been done; but the probabilities point that way.

(3) Human beings not only think but *feel*, and a record of what they have felt is embedded in their memory along with the corresponding factual data. The exact way in which feeling becomes attached to data is crucial. It is often disproportionate, hence neurosis and "irrational" prejudices and preferences; it can become attached to fortuitous elements in the situation, and even to words. (This, of course, is highly relevant to poetry, and literature generally.) In a practical physiological way, we know absolutely nothing about how this takes place. We can suspect it is connected with the changing chemical patterns in the brain, about which we know exceedingly little; computers have no chemical aspect.

CRUDE ATTEMPTS to equip existing computers with something resembling feelings are just beginning to be made. This year John Loehlin, a young psychologist at the University of Nebraska, set up a computer programme which provides a model of personality and which he named ALDOUS (with *Brave New World* in mind). ALDOUS is equipped with three emotions—love, fear, and anger—which are graduated in ten steps. A strong emotion tends to master a weaker one. Situations which ALDOUS meets are classified as "satisfying," "painful," and "frustrating," in varying degrees. ALDOUS, like a man or one of the higher animals, has two memories, a short-term one for dealing with current situations, and a long-term one which accumulates past experience. ALDOUS has been put through contrasting "lives," and his behaviour and attitudes are found to depend consistently on his experience in a given life. He has been by turns gullible, bold, and sceptical; he has been hesitant and decisive.

This is, of course, still a primitive model. ALDOUS not only has no unconscious, but he has no initiative, for he cannot form plans about how to maximise his satisfaction. His importance is simply in showing how digital computers may be used to explore psychological problems. To devise more complex programmes which will incorporate "initiative," etc., apparently presents no fundamental difficulty.

A British mathematician, I. J. Good, recently stirred up some delighted philosophical controversy with a paper titled: *"Can an Android Feel Pain?"* Like the simpler question, "Can a computer think?" on which a lot of ink was spilled a few years ago, the issue is merely a semantic one. If "think" is defined as to arrive at schemata by the precise method employed by the human brain in arriving at them, the answer is clearly "No." If "think" is defined pragmatically as reaching the results which *we* reach by what we call thinking, by whatever route, the

[5] Hubel, D. M., and Wiesel, T. N., *J. Physiology* (1962), vol. 160, p. 106. Receptive Fields, Binocular Interaction and Functional Architecture in the Cat's Visual Cortex.

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answer is certainly yes.[6] Similarly, if Loehlin's computer is not feeling, it is very difficult to say what it *is* doing. (It is certainly not pretending to feel, for that implies that it knows how to pretend.)

It is sometimes objected that computers cannot show "insight"—that is, think inductively. Though it is true that computers are designed deliberately for deductive operations, they can and have been programmed to perform inductive ones, though this does not, so to speak, come naturally to them.[7]

SIMILAR CONSIDERATIONS apply to the question, "Can computers (or Androids) feel?" Semantics remains a closed book to many philosophers, and the issue occupied a surprising amount of time at a recent U.S. symposium on "the Mind-Brain problem." After various speakers had argued that an Android which completely simulated human behaviour and asserted that it was human and could feel, would have to be treated as human, Dr. Paul Weiss attempted to rebut this view, and proposed as a criterion that humans could love and be loved, while Androids could not.

However, I am confident that this solution would not work. We all know how easily men treat a motor-car, for instance, or a boat, as if it were human, and a child only slowly learns to separate the inanimate from the animate. A computer which exhibited quasi-human characteristics might well arouse affectionate emotions in its master and could readily be programmed to show sympathy and interest in any individual identifying himself by a particular call-sign. Before long, a computer will be able to recognise an individual optically and will be able to develop sympathy towards him by self-programming methods resembling the growth of human sympathy much more nearly.

One of the signs often proposed to distinguish Androids from men is that men are endowed with "free will." The only pragmatic test of free-will is that the behavioural outcome is unpredictable.[8] There is no difficulty at all in endowing computers with randomising devices which will make their response to a situation wholly unpredictable (that is how ERNIE functions, in selecting premium bond numbers), and since their calculations are so rapid, their answers are in any case unpredictable in point of fact. The proponent of such a test may feebly reply that, though he cannot define it, he feels in his bones that free-will entails something more than this. To this, no reasoned reply is possible, except to challenge him to propose a test which can be applied to an Android which will prove that it does *not* enjoy free-will.

Similarly, it is asserted that men can "understand" a problem when it has been explained to them, but that computers do not. Here again, we are forced to consider more carefully than we are used to do, what we mean by such a statement. Pragmatically, it seems to mean that, the principle having been grasped, one can now apply the method involved to analogous situations. But this, too, is by no means beyond the capability of computers: indeed, "analogue" computers, as their name implies, are well adapted to such comparisons.

The obstinate fact is, as Michael Scriven has shown,[9] that there is no *logically*-sufficient condition which will determine whether a set of responses has been given by a human being or by a suitably designed computer. Thus the old philosophical problem of Mind *vs.* Brain has taken on a new urgency. The conclusion which Scriven reaches is that, if the day comes when a computer (provided that it understands English perfectly and is incapable of lying) replies to the question "Are you a person?" with an affirmative, we shall have to believe it.

Some Consequences

MARVIN MINSKY, an MIT mathematician who is one of the theoreticians in this field, and who has been devising new ways of computer-programming, gave it to me as his considered opinion that "in ten years' time these machines will be able to solve mathematical problems and play a good game of chess, and

[6] The late A. M. Turing, a brilliant theoretician in the field, once declared that he would consider that a computer could think if, in the course of a five-minute conversation conducted by teleprinter, it could convince its interlocutor that it was a woman, at least as well as a man could. He devoted some time to describing how this could be managed.

[7] Thus, a computer recently produced a brilliant new solution for one of Euclid's problems, which had never occurred to the mathematicians.

[8] See D. M. MacKay *"On Comparing the Brain with Machines"* in *American Scientist* (1954), vol. 42 (2), pp. 261–268.

[9] In his very original paper, *"The Compleat Robot: a Prolegomena to Androidology,"* reprinted in *Dimensions of Mind*, edited by Sidney Hook (Glencoe Free Press, 1960).

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in thirty years they will be smarter than men. . . ."

But even if we do not look so far ahead, we can expect even in the next four or five years to see computers moving into two major fields. First, the direct control of industrial processes—a start is being made with chemical processes and the production of plastics, where small adjustments in the flow rates of the several constituents can both save money and produce a more uniform product. Second, the task of abstracting and indexing the mounting flood of scientific papers being turned out all over the world. Every day, somewhere or other, three new scientific periodicals are started. It has been estimated by an American firm that "for any research costing less than $100,000 it is simpler to repeat the research than hunt for the existing papers on the problem. . . ." Computers are well adapted to sort and store this information, once the technical problems of indexing properly are solved; and no doubt before long they will translate the document into the enquirer's language. Rocky syntax can be overlooked when only the gist is what matters.

Rather further ahead (but not much) lies the application of computers to business strategy and to war, and to the drawing up of the national budget. The Chancellor of the Exchequer can indeed expect to be a fairly early victim of technological unemployment.

CLEARLY WE HAVE ON OUR HANDS a Second Industrial Revolution. How far can we peer into the mists and see what the consequences of it may be?

Few people have yet devoted much serious thought to the probable social consequences of these developments.[10] Some are fairly obvious—an intensification of the problem of leisure, the undermining of trade union power, a widening of the gap between have and have-not nations. Two, however, are more novel in character.

First, the class which can expect to feel the impact of "cybernation"—as the control of equipment by logical devices has been termed—is that of middle management. Just as steam and electric power displaced the craftsman and substituted a new social class of hourly-paid labour, having little security of tenure and no personal involvement with the work performed, so the computer may disenfranchise the middle-manager. It has taken society a century to work out the consequences of the former revolution, and the second may well be as far-reaching. Middle-management is a class which contributes to many community activities, which consumes many quality goods and services, and its disruption could have social and commercial consequences which would change the whole pattern of society as we know it.

Since, however, the have-not countries will be short of management it may well be that middle-managers will emigrate from computer-owning "have" countries to "have-not" countries on a considerable scale.

There are many professional activities which probably cannot be automated extensively—doctors and lawyers and designers, for instance—though computers will be used for diagnosis of difficult medical cases, and the act of judging could well be taken over by computers.[11] Since income levels will be rising, the numbers of people desiring these services will rise and they will want them more frequently. Such people will tend to be overworked, as already they are to-day.

The second danger which the more far-sighted prophets mutter about is that "people will tend less and less to attempt to understand public issues—and will leave everything to the computers. . . ." Politicians, in consequence, will be less and less able to debate public issues: they will be confined to quoting the results produced by the Party Computer, in contradiction to those produced by the rival party's computer. Political discussion will be reduced to argument between the programmers as to the soundness of the rival computer programmes. Politicians themselves will therefore depend increasingly upon their powers of projecting their personalities, while their scope of action will be executive: *i.e.*, the authoritarian will be at a premium.

The small group of people who understand computers will become an élite in whose hands the real power will reside. According to the writer of the report above mentioned, they will be selected for special aptitude in early youth and trained for their role with the same care and devotion as a ballerina.

[10] However, a rather doom-laden report was issued last year by the U.S. Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions—*"Cybernation: The Silent Conquest."* It aroused considerable American comment, and prompted the *New York Times* to publish an editorial headed "Is Man Obsolete?"

[11] See A. D. Booth, *"Some Applications of Digital Computers in Medicine,"* in *Physics in Medicine and Biology* (January, 1962), vol. 6 (3), pp. 377–388.

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THE POSSIBILITY THAT MAN will delegate all his most important functions to computers, with deleterious effects on his own ability to think, probably has the same sort of truth as the statement that the motor car undermines man's ability to walk. It is true, but it is not disastrous, and men may foster intellectual sports to reintroduce thought into their lives, just as they have developed physical sports to provide physical exercise.

The possibility of running war operations by computer is being very actively studied by the military in America (and doubtless in Russia), and some people fear that a computer might be more likely to press the symbolic button which would plunge us into Armageddon than a Pentagon general, a conclusion which may be unjust to computers. In this connection it may be assumed that computers will be programmed to go on conducting offensive operations even when all their masters are dead. Thus the bizarre possibility arises that the computers of two countries may continue to wage war with one another long after the human warriors on either side are dead. Computers thus have a sinister affinity to the broom in the fable of the "Sorcerer's Apprentice."

Professor Donald McKay of Keele is one of those I met who feel that there is a real danger that "we may be led into abdicating to computers a moral responsibility and a psychological involvement in our own fates which we cannot, as human beings, afford to do without...." Faced with the competition of these fantastic machines, we may despair of making our own intellectual efforts and sink into trivial or self-indulgent activities.

Immature human beings like to assuage their anxieties by leaving all decisions in the hands of a supreme father-figure. In the Middle Ages, all was ordained by God and might not be questioned. A later age referred similarly to "the hands of Providence." To-day (as Dr. Bruno Bettelheim has pointed out), when many people find it impossible to believe in a deity of this kind, the computer offers a substitute. To believe it capable of solving all our problems, even if it should happen to be a justified belief, may well be the psychological death-trap for man.

LUCEBERT, *whose drawing we reproduce on p. 47, is a Dutch artist (born 1924) who was one of the founder members of the well-known* COBRA *group of Dutch and Belgian painters. Other members who have established great reputations since the war are Appel, Corneille, and Alenschinsky. Besides being a painter who has had very successful exhibitions, mostly in Germany (in Cologne and Bochum of recent years), Lucebert is perhaps the most famous Dutch poet of the younger generation. In 1954 he was for some months secretary, in East Berlin, to Berthold Brecht, whom he met at a poets' Congress in Belgium. The first English exhibition of work by Lucebert will be held at the New London Gallery in the autumn.* →

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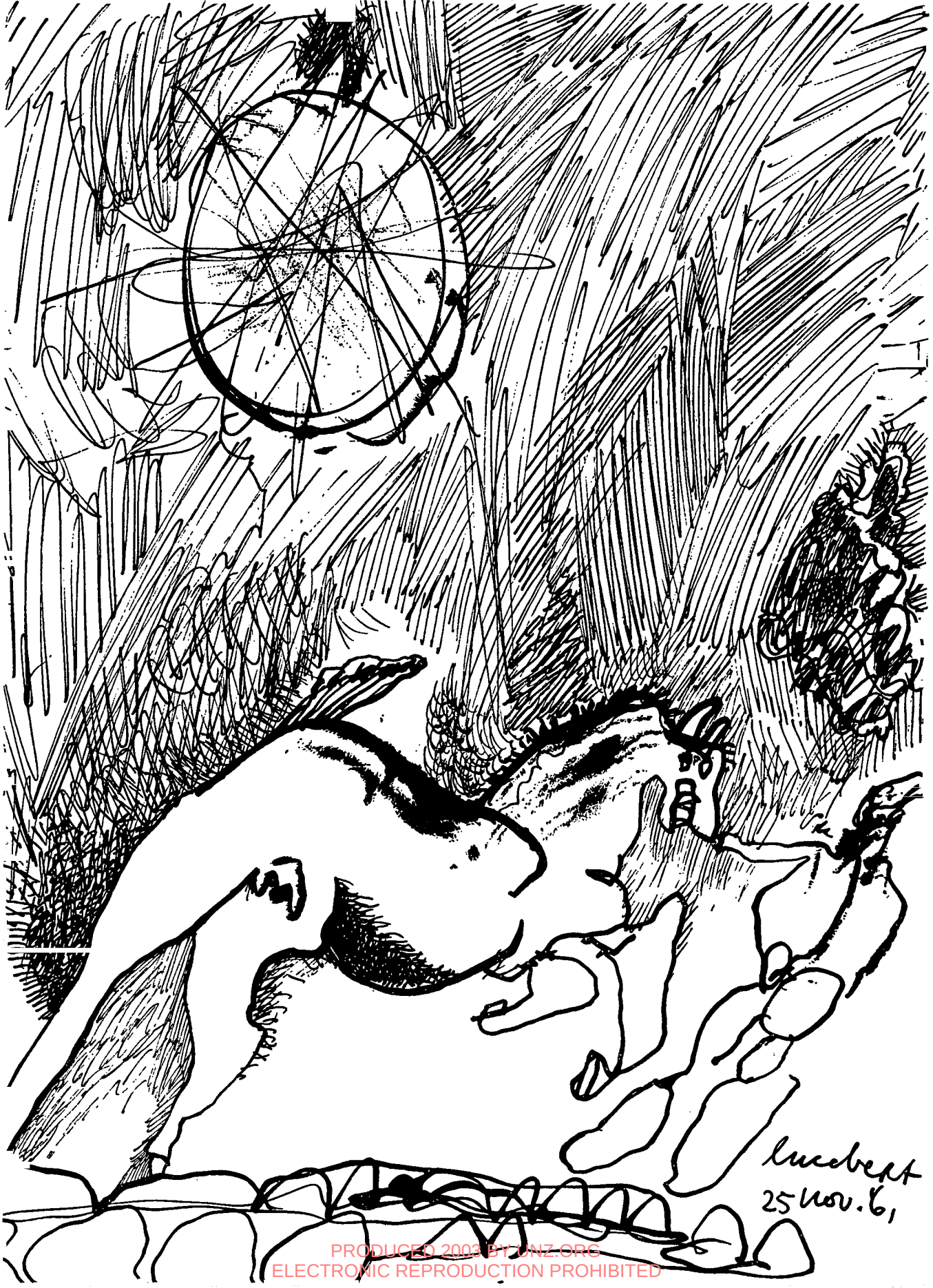

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Louis MacNeice

THE DEATH of a poet is no occasion for a post-mortem on his poetry. Unbecoming if he were a stranger, impossible if he were a personal friend. I must, however, say this much. In my opinion, Louis MacNeice's later poems, while continuing to exhibit the technical excellence and delicacy of ear which had always been his from the beginning, are both more moving and more original than his earlier. The last ones I read—in *The Observer*, I think—seem to me among his very best, and I look forward eagerly to the posthumous volume. It is a thousand pities, too, that when, with the assistance of Professor Ernest Stahl, he translated most of Goethe's *Faust*, he did not translate it all, for we are unlikely to see a better English version.

From a literary point of view, the customary journalistic linkage of the names Auden, Day Lewis, MacNeice, Spender, is, and always was, absurd. Even when we have seemed to share some common concern—political, let us say, our approaches to it, our sensibilities and techniques were always different. Personally, however, the linkage makes some sense. Though we got to know each other at different times—I do not think we were ever, all four of us, in the same room together—we did become friends and, I like to believe, have remained friends ever since, despite the obstacles to frequent re-union which the years inevitably create.

If someone is really my friend, then, as F. H. Bradley said, when I think of him, I must feel pleased with myself. We are also friends if, on meeting again after a long separation, we feel as if we had only parted yesterday. Whenever I thought of Louis MacNeice, I felt myself fortunate and, whenever we met, it was as easy and pleasant to talk as it had ever been.

WE MUST CERTAINLY have met at Oxford though I have no clear recollection of doing so. I remember a tall dark languid undergraduate from Merton, rather foppishly dressed. Though the "aesthete" was soon to disappear, he always retained a dandy's interest in clothes which, in his case, was an authentic reflection of his fastidious artistic conscience. It is an interest which is impassible to my imagination, but it became him. When he won a First in Greats, gossip reported that his tutor was furious, having predicted he would only get a Third since he had done no work. The tutor's reaction does not surprise me. On anybody who did not know him well and had never witnessed his powers of concentration and the rapidity of his mind, the first impression must have been of a lazy over-gregarious man who spent more time than he should pub-crawling. Even to me, it remains a mystery that he was able to produce work of the quantity and quality that he did: his constitution, physical and mental, was very tough indeed.

We first became friends when he was appointed a lecturer at the

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University of Birmingham, which was my home town. My memory for details is so bad that I cannot now recall exactly how it came about that when, in 1936, I went to Iceland, we decided that he should join me there and collaborate in writing a travel book. One thing is clear: we must already have developed a mutual professional respect and a personal rapport without which collaboration is unthinkable.

"A MAN," said Thomas Fuller, "knows his companion in a long journey and a little inn." In Iceland our journeys were long, sometimes arduous, and our inn, more often than not, a tent for two which was not quite waterproof. Louis MacNeice turned out to be, so far as I was concerned, the ideal travelling companion, funny, observant, tolerant and good-tempered. I have very rarely in my life enjoyed myself so much as I did during those weeks when we were constantly together.

Circumstances made our later meetings all too infrequent and too brief. When he was teaching at Cornell, I was living in Brooklyn and, on his visits to New York, he used to stay with me. It was a curious household, presided over by a curious and remarkable character, the late George Davis, then literary editor of *Mademoiselle*. Besides being one of the wittiest of men, George Davis has the distinction of being the first editor of a fashion magazine to print "high-brow" fiction and poetry. One never knew whom one would meet in the house—Gipsy Rose Lee, Tchelitchev, Benjamin Britten, Golo Mann, Oliver Smith, Carson McCullers, Paul Bowles—and I think Louis enjoyed his visits to our menagerie. The last time I saw him before his return to England was in a hospital in Portsmouth, Mass., where he was recovering from an emergency appendectomy and reading, with great appreciation, *Huckleberry Finn* for the first time.

After the War, though we always met when he came to the States or I came to London, such visits did not occur very often. How a poet is to earn an honest living is a problem to which there is no entirely satisfactory solution. If I sometimes wondered whether teaching would not have been a better breadwinner for him than writing for the radio, the B.B.C. certainly did all it could to lessen the pressure and tedium of his regular job. Reading and hearing his radio plays, I find myself wishing he had been more interested in music than he was, for the kind of talent they reveal might have made him a first-rate librettist, and a good opera is less ephemeral than the very finest radio play. To be honest, though, I suppose I am glad he did not become one; he would have been much too formidable a rival.

THE PERSONAL QUALITY of his which I most admired was his stoic reserve. I know that he suffered a great deal from fits of depression, but he never spoke of them or asked for consolation, and at times when I knew he was having troubles in his personal life, he never, as so many people do, wore one out by harping upon them and demanding the help and advice one is always powerless to give.

He was a pleasure to be with. It is a pleasure to remember him. He was, and always will be, a pleasure to read.

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Three Poems by Robert Lowell

(*For Harriet Winslow*)

Soft Wood

Sometimes I have supposed seals
must live as long as the Scholar Gypsy.
Even in their barred pond at the zoo they are happy,
and no sunflower turns
more delicately to the sun
without a wincing of the will.

Here too in Maine things bend to the wind forever.
After two years away, one must get used
to the painted soft wood staying bright and clean,
to the air blasting an all-white-wall whiter,
as it blows through curtain and screen
touched with salt and evergreen.

The green juniper berry spills crystal clear gin,
and even the hot water in the bathtub
is more than water
and rich with the scouring effervescence
of something healing,
the illimitable salt.

Things last, but sometimes for days here,
only children seem fit to handle children,
and there is no utility or inspiration
in the wind smashing without direction.
The fresh paint
on the captains' houses hides softer wood.

Their square riggers used to whiten
the four corners of the globe,
but it's no consolation to know
the possessors seldom outlast the possessions,
once warped and mothered by their touch.
Shed skin will never fit another wearer.

Yet the seal pack will bark past my window
summer after summer.
This is the season
when our friends may and will die daily.
Surely the lives of the old
are briefer than the young.

Harriet Winslow, who owned this house,
was more to me than my mother.
I think of you far off in Washington,
breathing in the heat wave
and air-conditioning, knowing
each drug that numbs alerts another nerve to pain.

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The Flaw

A seal swims like a poodle through this sheet
of blinding salt. The harbour's graveyard, here
and there a rock, and here and there a pine,
throbs on the essence of the gasoline.
Some mote, some eye-flaw, wobbles on the heat,
hair-thin, hair-dark, the fragment of a hair—

a noose, a question? All is possible;
if there's free will, it's something like this hair,
inside my eye, outside my eye, yet free,
airless as grace, if the good God . . . I see.
Our bodies quiver. In this rustling air,
all's possible, all's unpredictable.

Old wives and husbands! Look, their gravestones wait
in couples with the name and half the date—
one future and one freedom. In a flash,
I see us whiten into skeletons,
our eager, sharpened cries, a pair of stones,
cutting like shark fins through the boundless wash.

Two walking cobwebs, almost bodiless,
crossed paths here once, kept house, and lay in beds.
Your fingertips once touched my fingertips,
and set us tingling through a thousand threads.
Poor pulsing *Fête Champêtre!* The summer slips
between our fingers into nothingness.

We too lean forward, as the heat waves roll
over our bodies, grown insensible,
ready to dwindle off into the soul,
two motes, or eye-flaws, the invisible . . .
Hope of the hopeless launched and cast adrift
on the great flaw that gives the final gift.

Dear Figure curving like a questionmark,
how will I hear your answer in the dark?

Night Sweat

Work-table, litter, books and standing lamp,
plain things, my stalled equipment, the old
broom—
but I am living in a furnished room,
for ten nights now I've felt the creeping damp
float over my pajamas' wilted white . . .
Sweet salt embalms me and my head is wet,
everything streams and tells me this is right;
my life's fever is soaking in night sweat—
one life, one writing! But the downward glide
and bias of existing wrings us dry—
always inside me is the child who died,
always inside me is his will to die—
one universe, one body . . . in this urn
the animal night sweats of the spirit burn.

Behind me! You! Again I feel the light
lighten my leaded eyelids, while the gray
skulled horses whinny for the soot of night.
I dabble in the dapple of the day,
a heap of wet clothes, seamy, shivering,
I see my flesh and bedding washed with light,
my child exploding into dynamite,
my wife . . . your lightness alters everything,
and tears the black web from the spider's sack,
as your heart hops and flutters like a hare.
Poor turtle, tortoise, if I cannot clear
the surface of these troubled waters here,
absolve me, help me, Dear Heart, as you bear
this world's dead weight and cycle on your
back.

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Isabella Gardner

This Room is Full of Clocks

I am trying to write at a desk that is mine
these mornings thanks to the kindness of a stranger.
His room is full of clocks. All of them are ticking.
I fumble through a folder of abandoned poems
and of news stories I cut from papers I must
have conned some enterprising morning years ago.

Here is the account of a rare black swan that flew
from somewhere to Waukegan Harbor to a Greek
café where "it huddled at the door its feathers
drenched with oil." The swan was sad reports the paper, so Mathon
Kyritsis, restaurant keeper and fisherman,
consulted an ornithologist who said the
sorry bird was one of one hundred nineteen Black
Australian Swans that still survive and that the bird
could not live in captivity without its mate.
No doubt this Rare Swan died of fatigue let alone
bereavement even before I snipped the clippings.
Perhaps Mr. Kyritsis lives telling his tale . . .
The paper did not give the age of Mathon K.

Here's a clipping with the heading ANIMALS:
HOW OLD THEY GET. It is an accounting from "the
reliable records of zoos, aquariums
and aviaries all over the world," offered
with comments by the Cook County Forest Preserve.
For instance it says here that "man is longer lived
than any other mammal," and sure enough the
record shows a pampered elephant only made
it to sixty-nine. It is different for some
of our poets. MacNeice and Roethke have died
at fifty-five just like the Giant Salamander
while an occasional catfish is alive at
sixty. I don't begrudge the turkey-buzzard his
one hundred and eighteen years, nor the swan who if
he has his mate can live to one hundred and two
(that rare Black Swan who flew to Waukegan did not)
but I mind reading that coddled alligators
(safe from such random killers as love or neglect)
are able to thrash and lash and grin at sixty-eight.
Even in these days not Thomas, cummings, Roethke
Or MacNeice have managed that. It is possible
that there should be a Forest Preserve for poets
each with his or her mate but I remind myself
that the poet is rumoured to be less constant
than the swan. No the bard must do his best with book
and bed and booze and blunders of the heart and
bearing witness burying friends banning bombs
and using onomatopeia with restraint.

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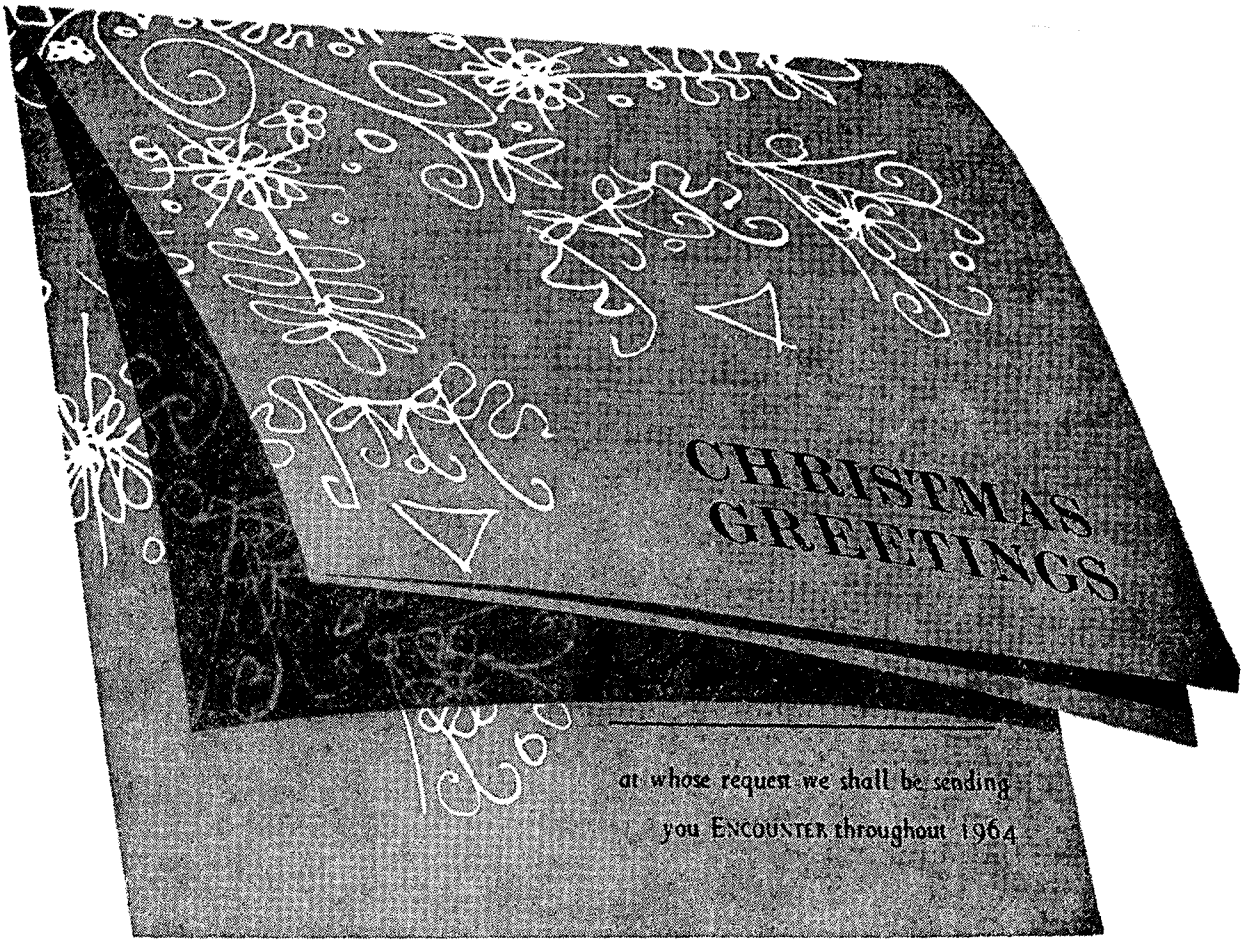

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NOTES & TOPICS

An Atlantic Constitution?

ANDREW SHONFIELD'S article on "Transatlantic Differences" [ENCOUNTER, September] is written with all his accustomed perception and cogency. He contrasts vividly the inbuilt difficulties of strong and consistent federal government in the United States with the greater possibilities of coherent policy in the more centralised European, and especially British, systems. At the same time, he is fully sympathetic towards the deep difficulties of changing the fundamental structure of American administration, and acutely conscious of the beam that is in our British eye—"how much of the democratic process of control we have forgone for the sake of our tidiness...."

It seems to me hard to give these points too much emphasis. Much of the strident argument between different branches and groups at all levels of American government, which produces so chaotic an effect on the mind of the observer, arises from the fact that the Americans really do believe in, and practise, self-government; the people not only genuinely have to be persuaded to courses of action by the authorities, but exercise their initiative in politics with much greater frequency and force than we do. And this popular will is essentially rooted in the diverse localities of the great sub-continent, the existence of which necessitates a federal system where power is deliberately divided, not merely between Washington and the fifty (different) State governments but also between the executive, legislative, and judicial arms in all of these fifty-one constitutions. This division of power is positively welcomed by most Americans as the surest protection of their liberties. We, on the other hand, with our royal and aristocratic tradition of authority, still seem to move in the sort of ambit envisaged in the dictum of Sieyès that "confidence should arise from beneath and power descend from above." All the checks on the executive—the Lords, the Commons themselves, the judiciary, the processes of the Common Law—have withered alarmingly in the last half-century, so that in some respects true democratic self-government scarcely appears to operate in Britain at all. It is indeed possible to pay too high a price for neatness and order.

ON THE OTHER HAND, it seems to me that Mr. Shonfield does perhaps underestimate the progress made recently towards more effective and predictable control of American policies by the Federal Government, and especially by the President. In all its branches the growth of the Executive since 1933 is extraordinary, as the prodigious expansion of the mere physical plant of the District of Columbia in these last thirty years dramatically demonstrates. In foreign affairs the overthrow of isolationism is in the true sense revolutionary, and means have been found to effect this within the framework of the Constitution, so that, for example, the United States has widespread treaty obligations which she will honour automatically despite the fact that the Congress alone is empowered to declare war. In the sphere which particularly worries Mr. Shonfield, that of international economic commitments by Washington, it may well prove possible to adapt the procedure devised for the off-shore islands of Formosa and the Middle East (in the Eisenhower Doctrine)—the prior authorisation by Congress of discretionary but binding Executive action.

At only one point, however, does it appear to me that he, in common with almost all Britons, fails to understand a fundamental aspect of the American character and system which may militate against his rather gloomy conviction that, primarily because of American inflexibility, "it isn't and won't... become progressively easier to do business between the two" (Britain—or Europe—and America), or to bind them institutionally closer together. We in this country are such incurable piecemeal-pragmatists that it really never occurs to us that any other, more radical, approach is possible in politics. The Continental nations are not so imbued as this with the gradualism of Burke, but they asked no more of members of the Common Market than a general pledge to work for European political unity, and we blenched even at that. The Americans have in the past been apt to employ a very different method, that of the great leap forward. Instead of edging slowly towards a somewhat vague ultimate goal, they jump rapidly to a much more elaborately devised new stage embodied in a theoretical blueprint, and then, with their equally pragmatic political ability, proceed to try and fill in the practical details. Sometimes there are in politics obstacles so formidable that this is the only way to surmount them (as we ourselves found in the 17th century); by summoning extraordinary, emergency, resources of strength we scramble over them, and then sort ourselves out on the other side as best we may. Admittedly, as American 19th-century history in some ways shows, this sorting-out process can be an undignified and painful one, but it may be the only way to certain objectives.

The formation of the American Constitution

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in 1787 was the classic example of this procedure, and it is in this sense that it is relevant to our present predicament in the West. It is very doubtful indeed whether the United States as we know it would ever have emerged from the thirteen independent colonies without this consummate, once and for all, act of political will which produced a written constitution on which the whole American political system has been based ever since. The sorting-out process still goes on and is the main reason why lawyers in the United States perform so many functions that Mr. Shonfield regards as properly and purely political. I well remember my own shock, nearly twenty years ago, on receiving from the great Chief Justice Harlan Stone, in answer to a question on this subject, the answer, "Of course we allow political considerations to influence our judgments in the Supreme Court. Our chief duty is to interpret a fundamental instrument and this is essentially political."

THUS IT MAY well be that the best hope of increasing co-operation among the Western nations may be in calling an international constitutional Convention of the Atlantic powers—the normal domestic American procedure for sweeping constitutional change—authorised to devise, and to specify measures for implementing, a basic and binding federal constitution for its member states, who would thus surrender their national sovereignty at one blow. Would it be America, as Mr. Shonfield fears, or Britain which would be the less ready to take this step, so drastic and yet so vital?

H. C. Allen

God, & the Theologians

IN RECENT YEARS, there has been a growing volume of discussion of the nature and meaning of atheism; and this is perhaps as good a sign as any of the renewed theological concern of our time. For atheism is, after all, a theological matter, and concern with it is a reflection of theological interest. Yet, while the recent discussions of atheism have been quite illuminating at some points, it seems to me that they suffer from failure to make a distinction which I take to be quite crucial to the problem. I mean the distinction between atheism as a *speculative* affair and atheism as an *existential* reality.

The atheism we are all familiar with is the speculative atheism that emerged in the western world towards the end of the seventeenth century, made some headway in the eighteenth, proliferated luxuriantly in the nineteenth, and has lasted into our own time. It is an atheism that claims to possess rational arguments to disprove the "existence of God." And why not? Western thinkers have always been preoccupied with the problem of the divine, and have brought forth a wide variety of views on this subject, such as theism, deism, pantheism, panentheism, etc., etc. Why not atheism alongside the rest? So far, both theism and atheism remain metaphysical affairs involving metaphysical speculation *de natura deorum*; neither is essentially theological, certainly not religious. Both, it seems to me—both speculative theism and speculative atheism—have much to say that is interesting and significant; neither, however, has proved, nor, so far as I can see, can conceivably prove its case. And the controversy will perhaps go on as long as men remain interested in these matters—which, I hope, will be to the end of time.

We find ourselves in a very different posture when we turn to the "problem of God" not as a speculative affair, but as an existential concern. On this level, the difficulty is to discover and define what atheism is. For the structure of human being is such that man cannot live his life, or understand himself, without some ultimate concern that he takes as the that-beyond-which-there-is-nothing of his world. That is indeed his god, and the articulation of his life in terms of it is his religion. "Religion," Robert Calhoun has well said, "is man's life insofar as it is defined by his supreme loyalty and devotion." In this sense, every man, by virtue of being human, is *homo religiosus*; every man has his religion and has his god. On the existential level, then, the question is not god or no god, religion or no religion; but rather: What *kind* of god? What *kind* of religion?

Mr. Alasdair MacIntyre [ENCOUNTER, *September*] objects to this way of seeing the problem, and describes the "anthropological" approach involved as virtual atheism. He seems to regard it as a characteristic apologetic device of some modern Protestant theologians, particularly Paul Tillich and Rudolf Bultmann. It is a position, he assures us, quite "at odds with [the positions held by] Aquinas, Luther, and Billy Graham." I do not know about Billy Graham, and I will not here speak about St. Thomas. But whether atheistic or not, it is a position emphatically expressed by Martin Luther in one of the most authoritative of his writings:

> What is it to have a god, or what is God? *A god is that to which we look for all good, and where we resort for help in every time of need. To have a god is simply to trust and believe in one with all our heart. Confidence and faith of the heart make both God and an idol.* If your faith and confidence are right, then likewise your

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> god is the true God. On the other hand, if your confidence is false, then you have not the true God. For the two, faith and God, belong inevitably together. Now I say *whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is your god* [*The Larger Catechism*, exposition of the First Commandment; my emphasis].

As Luther puts it elsewhere, it is "either God or an idol"; there is no third. "Man must worship something," Dostoevsky echoes the same depth of understanding of human being. "If he does not worship God, he will worship an idol made of wood, or of gold, or of ideas." Man is indeed *homo religiosus*: without a god and without a faith he cannot live. This is not simply a psychological fact; it is an ontological exigency.

This puts the problem of atheism in a rather curious light. For whatever may be the case on the speculative level, *on the existential level there are no atheists*; there are only idolators. The "atheism" of a Feuerbach or of a young Marx was existentially not atheism at all, but the deification of Man; just as the "atheism" of the later Marx, and of so many Marxists, was actually a quasi-Hegelian deification of the Dialectic of History. On what does the believing Communist place his ultimate reliance, what does he "cling to" and "confide in," to what does he "look for all good" (to use Luther's language)? The Dialectic of History, of course! It requires a very firm resolution not to see what is before one's eyes to overlook the *religious* character of this posture.

No, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was mistaken: "modern man" has not entered a post-religious, post-metaphysical phase in which he "has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis...." (when was God ever simply a "working hypothesis?"). Large numbers of "modern men" may indeed have lost all real feeling for the Christian faith and Christian ways of thinking; but they have not thereby become "dereligionised": they have rather rendered themselves open to the incursion of the most fantastic forms of religion and the most absurd kinds of metaphysics. "Post-Christian" to a large extent our culture may be; but "post-religious," "dereligionised," it cannot be.

We may call John Dewey to witness, a "modern man" of great distinction who had definitely broken with Christianity. Was John Dewey, therefore, without religion—not merely without "religious feeling," but without religion and faith in the theological sense. Let Dewey himself answer:

> [We may ask] whether there are adequate grounds for faith in the potentialities of human nature, and whether they can be accompanied by the intensity and ardour once awakened by religious ideas on a theological level. Is human nature intrinsically such a poor thing that the idea is *absurd*? I do not attempt to give any answer, but the word *faith* is intentionally used. For, in the long run, democracy will stand or fall with the possibility of maintaining the faith, and justifying it by works (*Freedom and Culture*, 1939, p. 126).

> There are a steadily increasing number of persons who find security in *methods* of inquiry, of observation, experiment, of forming and following working hypotheses. Such persons are not unsettled by the upsetting of any special belief, because they retain security of procedure. They can say, borrowing language from another context, though this method slay my most cherished beliefs, yet will I trust it.... The guardianship of truth seems to them to have passed over to the *method* of attaining and testing beliefs. In this latter fundamental, they rest in intellectual and emotional peace ("Fundamentals," *The New Republic*, 1926, p. 276).

Comment is surely unnecessary. Here are two religions and two gods—the religion of Democratic Man and the religion of Scientific Method. The deliberately religious, even theological, language Dewey uses shows his own understanding of what it is he is saying. But scores of thousands of other "modern men" have made the same confessions of faith without realising that they were making religious statements about their gods; but so indeed they were, and are.

What has led to the rapid erosion of Christian beliefs and Christian attitudes in the past three hundred years still remains to be pondered and studied. For myself, I think a major factor has been the tremendous growth of natural science and technology in this period, though I mean this not at all in the banal "science vs. religion" sense. The fundamental conviction of Christianity is the belief in the insufficiency, nay, impotence, of man to straighten out his life or achieve anything worth while through his own powers and resources, without reliance on the *God beyond*. The development of modern science and technology has tended to make this conviction seem false, and even insulting; for, through science and technology, western man, until recently at least, was pretty well convinced that he was rapidly on the way to becoming the "Maker and Master of all" by virtue of the divine power (reason) *within* him, or within Mankind corporately. For sociological and other reasons, Christianity could be preserved, and even made to flourish, in externals; but it could not well be believed in by "modern man" with this confidence in himself.

But "modern man" is becoming "post-

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modern." After the unimaginable catastrophes of the past half-century, he is beginning to lose his easy confidence in himself, even in his collective self, and in Science and Technology as the road to utopia. A religious and metaphysical vacuum is thus being created. This vacuum will have to be filled. Will it be filled with a renascent, perhaps very much transformed, Christianity, or with still another delusive *Ersatz-religion*? The best of contemporary theologians have seen the problem and have recognised the challenge. At least that much must be said for them.

Will Herberg

Translation: the Perennial Problem

THE CURSE of Adam takes several forms, but one of the most ambiguous is the linguistic division of mankind. This is a curse one can sometimes rejoice in.

There are moods in which the variety of languages seems to offer a multiplication of life. So true is this that I, for one, have always had to hold myself back from language learning as from a vice; I can waste hours inefficiently poring over grammars or readers or just listening to the sound of half-intelligible languages on the radio. An even more pronounced case of the same tendency was a man I once knew whose method of recovering from 'flu was to start on a fresh language. Then, at other times, foreign languages can appear disgusting, as part of the senseless proliferation of nature, and the only words that ring true are those one learned before one ever realised there was such a thing as language. In this mood, one can hardly wait for the day when the inevitable process of unification will have put an end to all this repetitious naming of parts and everybody will grow up speaking one and the same language. This consummation is still some way off, and meanwhile the problem of interpreting and translating is very much with us, as it has been these three thousand years. Indeed, it is perhaps more important now, in the new phase of "internationalisation," than in previous centuries. It was certainly felt to be sufficiently important to be made the subject of a PEN international forum (held in Rome in November 1961). The verbatim report of the proceedings has just been issued in Great Britain.[1]

[1] *Translation and Translators.* International P.E.N., 62 Glebe Place, London, S.W.3, 5s.

It would be a mistake to expect any revelations from a comparison of views such as this, because the main truths about translation have been known for a very long time. The interesting thing is to have them reiterated in the modern context by such eminent writers and critics as Alberto Moravia and Roger Caillois, Paul Tabori and Maurice Cranston. The conference was chaired by Douglas Young, President of the Scottish Branch of the PEN Club, perhaps because the Scots, having had to cope with Lallans, are rather more sensitive to linguistic problems than the writers of some other, strictly monolingual, countries.

The issues raised by translation divide up neatly into two categories, the material and the psychological, and neither admits of ready or complete solutions.

ALL TRANSLATION supposes a choice, because it is impossible to translate any major literature in its entirety into other languages, and this choice is determined partly by the accidents of personal taste among publishers' readers, sometimes by social or political prejudice, and very often by commercial considerations. In most countries, a translated book has to take its chance on the market along with others, and it is normally handicapped from the start by a number of factors: the strangeness of the contents may not appeal, the style, however good, cannot have the flavour of that of an outstanding original work, and the operation is mortgaged to some extent by the need to pay the translator as well as the author. The situation is perhaps most favourable in some of the smaller countries where there is a strong desire for knowledge of other literatures and where a number of prominent intellectuals are prepared to spend time translating major foreign works. In these countries, translation is, as it were, a national import and the translator himself may enjoy considerable prestige. Elsewhere, the translated book has to compete against the vast native output, and translation may not be one of the favourite, or necessary, occupations of prominent intellectuals. In England, America and France, for instance, standards of achievement and rates of pay vary enormously. Although hundreds of thousands of pounds are spent on the teaching of French, even now bad translations from the French continue to appear. I noticed only the other day that the sub-titles of a French film showing in a West End cinema were peppered with mistakes, such as anyone with A-level French could be expected to avoid. I have found howlers in superbly edited volumes of French classics; they seem to be particularly numerous in translations of verse, one of the most recent extra-

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ordinary cases being Roy Campbell's rendering of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. It is true that the situation has improved considerably since before the war, but it is still a fact that surprisingly little checking of translations is done before publication. Anomalies in rates of pay are regrettably frequent; a good translator may be offered 2 guineas per thousand words, while a bad translator, through some fluke, is given 4½ to 5. It is hardly possible to do more than a thousand words a day of a really difficult literary text, so that a translator who is being paid at the rate of 2 or 3 guineas does about as well, financially, as an unskilled labourer. On the other hand, if the undertaking is not subsidised, it may be genuinely impossible for the publisher to pay more. Maurice Cranston, in one of his contributions to the debate, raised the question of what is to be done about a book such as Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique*, which is immensely long, ferociously difficult, and commercially unpromising; as a director of a publishing firm, he maintained that if the translator of this work is paid 4 guineas per thousand the publisher is bound to lose.

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE that the author, in return for the honour of being known abroad, should accept a much lower rate of profit on translations. This seems hard, because authors are badly enough paid as it is, unless they break into the best-seller class. Foundations and international organisations can help to some extent. Roger Caillois gives an interesting account of the attempts made by UNESCO to bring out representative classics from the lesser-known languages. My own view is that, in the last resort, the bulk of the work will have to be done by academic specialists in the languages concerned, if reasonable standards of accuracy are to be ensured. As an academic, I find that it is occasionally worthwhile to translate an interesting French book or article at the rate of 3 or 4 guineas per thousand. Since the exercise is valuable in itself and relevant to the work the university pays me to do, I can consider the fee as a helpful addition to my earnings and not as an economic wage for the effort expended.

On a subsidiary material point—the question of copyright—the report contains an interesting suggestion. An unfortunate aspect of the present situation is that, once the rights of a particular contemporary work have been sold, it cannot be re-translated, however bad the existing translation may be. It is a great pity, for instance, that the only English version of Sartre's *La Nausée*, a twentieth-century classic, should be very inadequate and that nothing can be done about this. Even Scott-Moncrieff's version of Proust, which has been a great popular success, is full of mistakes that could quite easily be corrected; as for the last part of the Proust translation, which was completed after Scott-Moncrieff's death, it is very bad. I therefore welcome the proposal that copyright in translation should expire after a much shorter period, to allow such calamities to be rectified.

However, even if all translations were internationally financed by some great, enlightened foundation, and new versions could be made indefinitely, irrespective of copyright, until the best possible results were achieved, the operation would still be partly frustrating, because of the nature of language. Translation, as each section of this report brings out in turn, is a perpetual attempt to square the circle. Each word or phrase in a given language has its physical form and its peculiar connotations, and these can never be reduplicated with complete accuracy in any other language. Just as the colour white is a sign of innocence and virginity in Western countries and a symbol of mourning in some parts of the East, so the most ordinary and apparently interchangeable terms have separate identities in each particular language. To take only one example, it is obvious that the English word "bread" and the French word "*pain*" differ in sound and sense; the nature and functions of this particular foodstuff are not identical in the two countries; when the words are used in literature, they elicit divergent series of rhymes and assonances; further, they do not necessarily correspond to each other in ready-made expressions, e.g., one's "bread-and-butter" may be "le biftek." If we look beyond the Anglo-French context, we find that outside Western Europe bread may be replaced by rice or some other staple food. One speaker at the conference pointed out that the Catholic Church, recognising this, allows Esquimaux to pray for their "daily fish." He did not explain whether the Church also authorises the communion service to be conducted with fish and whale-oil; this, presumably, would be the result of thorough and accurate translation, and the theological consequences would be considerable, since the basic properties of the ritual would become organic instead of vegetarian, and the Fisher of Men would himself be a product of ichthyophagous transubstantiation.

THE PARADOX OF LANGUAGE is that it often represents universal characteristics most strongly when it is intensely local; in Robert Frost's phrase, poetry is "nationalist." The strength of the representation may remain imperceptible to all those who did not assimilate the particular language in childhood. Racine and Pushkin

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are notable examples of the non-existence of great poets beyond their national frontiers. We are told that there is very great poetry in Dutch, Bengali, and Welsh, but we have to take the statement on trust; no translation can help us to appreciate it directly. We understand that Gadda, the Italian novelist who won the Formentor Prize last Easter, makes very effective use of dialect, but we can tell in advance that this quality will not come over in English translation, since any attempt to render Italian regional or urban speech by approximations to Yorkshire or Dorset or Cockney defeats its own purpose by reminding us still more forcibly of England. There is no way out of these difficulties; the "better" the English translation, in a sense, the more powerfully it encloses us within the English atmosphere. A translator might produce a very ingenious rendering of "Marie Chantal" French into "debby" English, and he would thereby convey the idea that there exists in France a form of inane, upper-class chatter, but at the same time he would, to some extent, conceal the fact that the social context of the chatter is not exactly the same in the two countries.

I remember once hearing a Sorbonne professor, a specialist in St. Augustine, say that a student who had really begun to understand St. Augustine's Latin would no longer be able to translate it, since there are no words in French to convey the flavour and the shades of meaning of the original. Similarly, when you have lived a lifetime with any two languages—with French and English, say—you realise that there are no equivalents at all; even *"Bonjour, Monsieur!"* does not set up the same series of psychological repercussions as "How do you do!," although the two phrases have often to be taken as synonymous. It follows that translation is a long, slow process of compromise, like ceaselessly reflecting objects in a distorting mirror with the hope, each time, that the reflection will be accurate, although one knows that this is impossible. The only comfort is that, if you start with a clear conviction of inevitable failure, you are sometimes agreeably surprised to discover that the sum total of thousands of strictly limited distortions is something which, without being identical with the original work, is like the potent ghost of that original.

J. G. Weightman

"The World Scene Transformed"

By Patrick Gordon Walker

I HAVE the greatest respect for Richard Lowenthal as a political analyst. For many years now I have learned from his hard-headed, well-informed and penetrating studies. Once again I have found the broad sweep of his "The World Scene Transformed" [ENCOUNTER, October] stimulating and illuminating. About some of the practical conclusions that he draws —about one in particular—I am not so sure.

I propose to approach this comment from the point of view of British foreign policy—which means that I look at the same picture from a narrower angle. British foreign policy must, of course, be based upon assumptions about the world scene as a whole: it must at the same time concentrate upon those fields in which Britain can bring a significant influence to bear. I will limit myself in the main to the context of our relations with Russia.

The critical question is how far and in what ways the policy of the Soviet Union is changing. Here Richard Lowenthal—as it seems to me—gives the most convincing and best thought-out analysis that I have come across. He is right that Soviet relations with the West and Soviet relations with China are separate and distinct things, although they interact. I appreciated his working out of the role of doctrine in the Sino-Soviet dispute. I had not thought before of the new breach between "Marxism" and "Leninism" that is opening up in the doctrinal controversy between China and the Soviet Union. The breach is perhaps deeper than Lowenthal states. The Soviet Union is becoming less Leninist and more Marxist in its own internal

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development. I have always thought that Leninism was a dangerous aberration of Marxism. Leninism raised the idea of a violent revolutionary situation from an episode in social evolution into a permanent principle. Leninism was infinitely more ruthless and dictatorial than the basic approach of Marx himself. Marxism suits much better than Leninism a country that has its revolution well behind it and regards it as something to conserve.

I think that Lowenthal leaves too much out of account the effect on Soviet policy of internal social changes inside Russia. I am aware that he has dealt with this question in other writings. He should, however, have given greater emphasis to the rising force of nationalism, particularly in the satellite countries and in the ex-colonies. This is something that the Communist doctrine both of Russia and China cannot accommodate and it tends to throw their policies out of gear. These further factors would not seriously affect Lowenthal's main analysis. The essence of the Sino-Soviet conflict is its necessary involvement in doctrinal issues of a far-reaching kind.

We must go back to the Reformation or to the division of the Christian world between catholic and orthodox for an analogy. Neither of these doctrinal ruptures solved the problems of the world: neither brought the need for defence and diplomacy to an end. But they transformed a pre-existing and apparently established system of power and conflict.

REGARDING THE CHANGING relations of the Soviet Union towards the West, it seems to me that Lowenthal underrates the climactic effect of the Cuba crisis.

In those few nightmare days the world changed. Two men with the destiny of the earth in their hands looked over the abyss into a totally new kind of war, such as men had never before confronted. With lesser weapons, fighting would have started. With nuclear missiles, war was averted because it was unimaginable. Khrushchev preferred a courageous but humiliating retreat to a war which, because of the nuclear balance, would have been mutually destructive.

Nuclear weapons are different in kind from any that man has known in his long warlike history. Maybe, as war changes its nature, human nature is also undergoing a unique change. Man is still warlike and prone to violence but he is for the first time in all human history beginning to find a great war unthinkable. No one can know whether we must actually experience the use of nuclear weapons before the full lesson is learnt—and then perhaps, too late. But the Cuba crisis may prove to have been the turning point.

I AGREE with Richard Lowenthal that the transformation of the world scene does not produce any immediate change in the problems facing us. I do not think that we are entering a stage of international pluralism or polycentrism in which the two opposed alliances are dissolving. What we are immediately faced with is a greater equality of strength within both the alliances and therefore a certain disinclination to follow the leader.

The world is still dominated by two superpowers that have sharply opposed interests. In the Western alliance are some great powers, of which Britain is one. It can, I think, with proper policies, be the most important.

Although the transformation of the world scene holds out hopes of radical changes, the West must, in the future for which we can plan policy, preserve its alliance and keep up its guard. The maintenance of the Western alliance must, therefore, remain a central British interest. But we cannot be static. We must do all we can to advance the transformation of the world scene, to maximise the chances it presents of prolonging and extending the present *détente*.

Of course, as Lowenthal says, we cannot know whether we are in a temporary *détente*. It is true that we have enjoyed such lulls before and that they have turned out later to have been a tactical move on the part of Russia. That is why we must keep up our guard. But I am inclined to assume with greater confidence than Richard Lowenthal the possible permanence of the *détente*—this, because I attach importance both to the internal changes in Russia and to the Cuba crisis. Doubtless we shall have periods of sharpness and even anger; but I think that we may not again go to the verge of major war.

I believe that the recognition of a measure of common interest between Russia and America will become an increasingly important feature of the world scene—though, doubtless, with ups and downs. We must do all we can to forward and extend this field of common interest. This will involve a series of difficult adjustments. We must be ready to contribute to this in the fields in which we, as a great but not a superpower, have influence.

AS I SEE IT, the major common interest between Russia and America is to stabilise the nuclear balance and to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The two are integrally related; because stabilisation is only possible if the two super-powers retain the virtual monopoly of nuclear weapons. Russia is clearly doing all it can to hinder the development of effective

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nuclear weapons by China. In the West the problem is more complex and Britain is directly involved.

Germany lies at the centre of this problem. In general, it is not easy for the West to press forward at any rate the early steps towards a further *détente* with Russia without in effect simultaneously stabilising the division of Germany. This must waken the Federal Republic's suspicions of steps towards relaxation; on the other hand, the Western alliance needs both Germany and the *détente* with the Soviet Union.

In particular there is the problem of whether or not the Federal Republic may one day want itself to become a nuclear power, perhaps through a gradually more intimate nuclear association with France. Here I come to my sharpest point of disagreement with Richard Lowenthal —namely his view that America should assist France to become a nuclear power.

Not only would this be a spread of nuclear weapons; it would also increase the danger that Germany would wish to become a nuclear power, too. Germany, it is true, is in a special position and has an interest in keeping open the possibility of reunification. But Germany is also a great power and unlikely to be content to be for ever the only non-nuclear great power in the Western alliance. The problem is how to satisfy the natural national aspirations of Germany and yet keep it willingly and in the true sense a non-nuclear power.

THE ONLY WAY is a radical reorganisation of the Western alliance, in which Britain can play the decisive role. Let Britain allow her present nuclear armament to run down and in exchange negotiate a real participation with America in the planning and control of her entire nuclear armoury. We should not have a finger on the trigger: but we should have a full say in the questions that determine, control, and check the use of nuclear weapons. I am not thinking of the firing of these weapons, but of their use as a source of power in the conflict of interest between the two alliances. We should participate in the knowledge and the decisions that affect the deployment and targeting of nuclear weapons and the formulation of doctrine concerning the relation of nuclear and conventional weapons.

Let Germany share equally in this arrangement. Make the same offer to France, to be taken up when she wishes. In the meantime give France no aid in her nuclear ambitions. By this means we would greatly contribute to the possibility of enlarging the *détente* with Russia, without involving strains upon the Western Alliance.

I oppose the multi-manned NATO nuclear force. Its creation would stand in the way of the necessary reorganisation of the Western alliance. It would divert the European effort from conventional to nuclear forces. I agree that we should not give recognition to the East German régime. However, if we are to secure guaranteed civil access to Berlin we will have to make the necessary arrangements with all concerned, including East Germany. I much like the idea that the West should take the initiative in proposing an all-German Treaty. Here, too, Britain could play a significant role.

Lowenthal has hit off admirably the objective that must guide and inspire our whole policy. We must do everything in our power to contribute to the kind of profound change in our opponent which alone can open the road to real peace; and, let me add, never must we do anything that hinders, impedes, or delays this kind of profound change.

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MUSIC, ART AND BOOK CRITICS HAVE LITTLE IN COMMON

YES ☐ NO ☐

Not true—on two counts. By virtue of their profession, they naturally all have a general interest in the arts. But more important still is a common desire to stimulate *your* interest in their arts. This is particularly true of the Sunday Telegraph's critics—**JOHN WARRACK** (music), **EDWIN MULLINS** (art) and **NIGEL DENNIS** (books), for example. A look at one week's issue will illustrate their guiding principle: that the really professional reviewer does not criticise destructively, but is devoted to his art and would like nothing more than for his readers to become as interested as he is himself.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

TAKE IT ON SUNDAY AND SEE IF YOU AGREE

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Arendt on Eichmann

By John Gross

HANNAH ARENDT'S report on the Eichmann trial* makes its appearance in this country at a time when it has already stirred up the bitterest controversy abroad, particularly in the United States. Under the circumstances, it is perhaps worthwhile spelling out a very elementary point at the outset: Miss Arendt is not, in the crudest sense, "against the Eichmann trial," only against various aspects of it. She admits that "its main purpose—to prosecute and to defend, to judge and to punish Adolf Eichmann—was achieved," and no one could close her book feeling that there was anything wrong in that purpose. She is "inclined to condone" the abduction of Eichmann from the Argentine, for reasons which she sets out clearly and persuasively, and it is important that she should not be confused in the public mind with those critics who objected to the trial on the grounds that it violated the principle of territorial jurisdiction, or because the judges were themselves Jewish, or because the state of Israel was not in existence at the time when Eichmann's crimes were committed. Far from agreeing with such people, she explicitly—and rightly—counters their arguments, which she characterises as "legalistic in the extreme" and "out of tune with reality and with all demands that justice must be done." Nor does she argue against the carrying out of the death penalty, whatever her own feelings in the matter. She is not sentimental on the subject of bringing the major Nazi criminals to justice, and it ought not to be overlooked that her fiercest criticisms are directed against the West German authorities for their frequent failure in this respect. She certainly approves of one consequence of Eichmann's capture, the fact that it triggered off "the first serious effort made by Germany to bring to trial at least those who were directly implicated in murder," even if the sentences meted out by local courts have proved to be for the most part "fantastically lenient."

Eichmann in Jerusalem is, in fact, a complicated book, and one which arouses complicated feelings. This is in itself something which we may well resent, since complicated feelings seem slightly indecent where anything relating to Adolf Eichmann is concerned. He stands convicted of crimes so foul, so abominable, that, as François Mauriac once wrote, it would be insulting the beasts to call them bestial. Surely the time for talking is past, and there is no place here for the if's and but's which are the intellectual's stock-in-trade. There is a strong temptation to discuss the book solely in terms of Miss Arendt's motives in writing it: was she chiefly animated, for example, by dislike of nationalism, or the chance to illustrate a private theory about totalitarianism, or even simply by the desire to be different? But Miss Arendt is a serious writer, and she deserves to be taken, at least initially, on her own terms. Her central argument rests on one assumption, that "the purpose of a trial is to render justice, and nothing else." The greater part of her book is devoted to trying to prove that the Jerusalem trial fell short of this ideal, largely because the prosecution case "was built on what the Jews had suffered, not on what Eichmann had done."

Whether or not one agrees with Miss Arendt's conclusions this is not a trivial point of view, and it is elaborated more thoroughly than anything else the author has to say. An account of the book which doesn't regard the conduct of the trial as the first issue to be discussed must therefore be in a sense somewhat misleading. But unfortunately Miss Arendt herself has made such a procedure difficult. It might have been possible to write a full-length study of the trial without becoming involved in wider issues regarding the fate of the Jews in occupied Europe, although I doubt it; at any rate, in the book as it stands there are numerous comments on the behaviour of the Jews in the face of the Nazi terror which have no immediate bearing on the question of whether or not justice was done in Jerusalem. They may not bulk as large as the discussion of what took place in the

* *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. By HANNAH ARENDT. Faber & Faber, London, 25s. Viking Press, New York.

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courtroom, but they are something more than isolated stray remarks. Taken together they add up to a picture which is both inaccurate and curiously unfeeling, and one which cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. This need not necessarily invalidate Miss Arendt's other arguments, but it hardly makes one take to them more kindly.

THERE ARE FOUR main topics which need to be clarified: the alleged complicity of Jewish communal leaders in the Nazi holocaust; the role of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* groups inside the concentration camps; relations between the Nazis and Zionist emissaries; and the general question of Jewish passivity or resistance during the war. If Miss Arendt's references to all these matters are inadequate, to say the least, one must make allowance for the fact that within her limited space she makes no claims to be comprehensive. But it must equally be borne in mind that she is writing, not for an audience of experts, but for the general public, whose knowledge of many of the events with which she deals must be assumed to be hazy, at best. So that when she writes, for example, that "we know the physiognomies of the Jewish leaders during the Nazi period very well," one is entitled to ask who "we" are meant to be, in this context. I wonder how many of Miss Arendt's readers in the *New Yorker* and elsewhere could name a single Jewish leader in Nazi-occupied Europe, let alone put a face to him. Some will certainly recall the name of Leo Baeck, one of the most distinguished and revered religious leaders ever produced by German Jewry (Miss Arendt calls him "mild-mannered" and "highly educated"), who when he was nearly seventy chose to remain in Berlin in order to help his people rather than flee to safety. They may be surprised, however, to learn that "in the eyes of both Jews and Gentiles" he was the "Jewish Fuehrer." Surprised, that is, until it is pointed out, as it has been by Marie Syrkin in the New York *Jewish Frontier*, that Miss Arendt bases this judgment simply on a phrase used of Baeck by one of Eichmann's lieutenants.

This is unlikely to be a mere slip on Miss Arendt's part, since her whole drift is towards presenting an artificial picture of the Jewish Councils set up by the Nazis to run the ghettos which they had established as thorough-going accomplices, who "enjoyed their new power" and were an essential part of the Nazi machinery of extermination. This co-operation, which she alleges that Eichmann thought of as "the very cornerstone" of Nazi policy, is regarded by Miss Arendt as "undoubtedly the darkest chapter of the whole dark story." Of course there were many other Jewish organisations apart from the Jewish Councils, but we are told that if the Jews "had really been unorganised and leaderless" far more of them would have survived. This is almost as much of a tautology as saying that if the Jews hadn't existed Hitler wouldn't have killed them, since as long as they did exist they were bound to need organisations and leaders. In any case, as several of Miss Arendt's American critics have already pointed out, the fact that Stalin had long since wiped out Jewish communal life didn't prevent the *Einsatzgruppen* murdering well over half a million Russian Jews in the first few months following Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union.

THE MAIN POINT about the Jewish Councils is that they were set up by the Nazis, and any individual member could always be replaced by another. No one has ever pretended that they were anything to be particularly proud of; Léon Poliakov, an authority of the highest repute, is certain that "many outright scoundrels insinuated themselves into the Councils." But he also concludes: "Historically the Jewish Councils were inevitable. Different judgments may be passed, depending on the specific case, on the motives of these men, and on the manner in which they exercised their functions." To weigh the evidence concerning each separate Council is perhaps an impossible task, and certainly one for experts; even if it could be proved that in every case they tried to act for the best (which it obviously could not) they would still seem unsympathetic figures to most people on account of the relatively privileged status which they enjoyed (until they too were murdered). But there is ample evidence to contradict Miss Arendt's caricature, which leaves an impression that the Jewish leaders simply worked like beavers to carry out Nazi policy. Many of the leaders were in fact honest men who were forced to weigh horrible alternatives at every step. By remaining on the Councils they chose to placate the Nazis (Miss Arendt's word for this is "co-operation," which suggests a voluntary partnership) in the hope of buying time and saving at least some lives, for they knew that they were faced with slavery and unprecedented mass-murder, but not with the Final Solution. Had they known in advance how systematic Nazi extermination was going to be they might well have acted otherwise, and even at the time there were many Jews who opposed them. But at the end of each day, when they saw that in spite of immense suffering and terrible losses the ghettos as a whole still survived, they must have felt—not without anguish, although this is something Miss Arendt seems reluctant to allow them—that they had chosen the lesser evil.

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Were they wrong? There are some who would argue that the two-and-a-half-year respite which the Warsaw ghetto gained was a precious thing in itself. This may seem a cruel attitude if one thinks of what the Jews inside the ghetto underwent during that period in terms of misery and starvation. But anyone who is aware of such documents as the Ringelblum Diaries or the Journal of Mary Berg will know how tenaciously the Warsaw Jews clung to life—not just animal existence, either, but a fully human life, with a truly amazing range of cultural activity. The Councils might have done more to obstruct the Nazis and to encourage resistance, though in general it is not very easy to see how; certainly nobody wants to exonerate them where they were at fault. But anyone whose first aim was to save lives might well have reasoned as they did: was their "co-operation" really "the darkest chapter of the whole dark story?"

Such a phrase might seem more appropriate in the case of the *Sonderkommando* groups, which makes it all the more important to understand exactly what they were. Miss Arendt refers to "the well-known fact that the actual work of killing in extermination centres was usually in the hands of Jewish commandos." But this is simply not true. The gas-chambers were manned by the SS; the main job of a *Sonderkommando* was to drag the corpses from the gas-chambers and prepare them for cremation by pulling out gold teeth and cutting off the women's hair, work which was often carried out under a shower of blows from sticks and rubber truncheons. Members of a *Sonderkommando* were kept strictly apart, and themselves exterminated and replaced every few weeks. They were selected for duty by the SS, but according to Miss Arendt "this was only horrible, it was no moral problem," since "the SS had a marked predilection for criminal elements; and, anyhow, it could only have been a selection of the worst." If this were altogether the case it would be hard to explain why there were members of the Auschwitz commando who tried to keep a secret list of the victims, and others who rose in rebellion against their tormentors. But it is known, for example, that the *Sonderkommando* which mutinied at Auschwitz in the autumn of 1944 included men who had formerly been among the leading intellectuals of Salonika.

MISS ARENDT'S view of Zionist activity in occupied Europe must be kept completely distinct from what she or anyone else thinks either of the present government of Israel or of Zionism as an ideology. I say "Zionist activity," although it would be difficult to tell from her book what that activity

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really was. She finds space to point out—correctly—that by no means all Jewish resistance was Zionist-inspired; but she has virtually nothing to say, to take only the most notable example, of those parachutists from Palestine (like the legendary Hannah Senesch) who lost their lives trying to help the Jewish underground in Eastern Europe. Well, Miss Arendt's theme is not heroism but justice, and she would no doubt rule that such evidence is inadmissible in the present case. But one would be less reluctant to accept such a ruling if she herself didn't contrive to give a gratuitous and distorted account of the Zionist emissaries who had dealings with Eichmann and his colleagues. They appear in her pages as more or less opposite numbers of the Nazis, roaming around Europe at will. Before total extermination became their official policy, the Nazis considered various schemes for driving the Jews out of Europe; Miss Arendt repeatedly suggests that this made them, to use her own word for it, "pro-Zionist." The Nazis *were* sometimes prepared to negotiate with Zionist representatives in the early days, and even concluded an arrangement with the Jewish Agency allowing emigrants to Palestine to transfer their funds there in the form of German goods. We are asked by Miss Arendt to believe that this was "a mutually highly satisfactory agreement," just as she tells us that Eichmann's first personal contacts with Zionists were "thoroughly satisfactory"—though without specifying to whom.

Even assuming that they put political considerations before everything else, even assuming that they felt no compassion for people who were often their close personal relatives, what kind of "satisfaction" could Zionists possibly have taken in seeing the overwhelming majority of their potential recruits first imprisoned and then destroyed? Let us concede that a Nazi found it easier to "understand" a Zionist than an assimilated French Jew or a Lithuanian talmudist (though he found it equally easy to kill all three). Eichmann himself had picked up a smattering of information about Zionism, and whether through malice or intellectual confusion from time to time chose to present himself as someone who "understood" and even respected the Zionists. But Miss Arendt assumes that this tells us as much about Zionism as it does about Eichmann. During their discussions about the possibility of ransoming the Jews of Hungary, Eichmann told Joel Brand that "an idealistic German" was now talking to "an idealistic Jew." Brand replied that he was an ordinary Jew concerned only with trying to save his brothers, and that he viewed Eichmann not as "idealistic" but solely as the murderer of the Jewish people. This is really the whole story. Miss Arendt quotes Eichmann's remark, but not Brand's reply.

No one will dispute that millions of Jews were rounded up (at the point of a gun) without offering physical resistance. But Miss Arendt doesn't allow sufficiently for the circumstances which brought this about; nor was the Jewish resistance movement quite as negligible as she suggests. She writes off the resistance groups in a sentence or two as "pitifully small," "incredibly weak and essentially harmless." If we think of them in comparison with the forces which Hitler had at his command, this was indeed the case. But many attempts at resistance were made, both individually and collectively, against desperate odds. There were bands of guerillas, for example, such as the group which fought in the woods of White Russia under the leadership of Anatol Belsky, which was over a thousand strong. Apart from the last stand of the Warsaw ghetto this aspect of the holocaust in Eastern Europe is scarcely known to the world at large, and ought at least to be recorded before it is brushed aside.

If the resistance groups were, all said and done, very small, consider the situation of the Jews in eastern Europe at the outbreak of war. They were trapped between Hitler and Stalin ("the one with the little moustache and the one with the big moustache"); cut off from the outside world, which was often in any case half-indifferent to their fate; and surrounded by predominantly anti-semitic neighbours, who in many cases were more than willing to do Hitler's work for him. They had no arms; they were a people lacking in military traditions; they were scattered over vast areas and divided among themselves. (Miss Arendt says that their losses would have been far less had they been leaderless and unorganised; but it is at least as plausible to argue that they could only have begun to defend themselves adequately if they had been far more highly organised than they were.) We must be careful not to think of them as one vast column of five or six million moving like sleepwalkers towards their death; they were rounded up in small groups, street by street and family by family. When an individual did offer resistance he had to bear in mind, not only that he would probably be throwing away his own life, but also that he would certainly be bringing down merciless reprisals on those who remained behind, including the old, the sick, and the very young. Above all, the Jews didn't really know what was happening to them: they weren't prepared for the full horror of genocide.

These are not original observations: they have often been made, and some of them are to be

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found in Miss Arendt. But I believe that she should have hammered them home much more strongly than she does. It may seem that here, as with the question of resistance, I am quarrelling over a mere matter of emphasis; but factors like these contribute powerfully to Miss Arendt's overall picture of the Jews co-operating in their own annihilation. A myth of Jewish "complicity" is in the air; it may even be vaguely confused in many minds with a quite separate matter, the personality-change frequently undergone by prisoners in concentration-camps which has been documented by Bruno Bettelheim and others. This complicity is a mysterious business. It can hardly mean active dedication to Nazi ideals. When Hitler first came to power a handful of German Jews set up the *Verband National-Deutscher Juden* in an attempt to reconcile the Nazi programme with the aspirations of truly "patriotic" Jews, but their movement quickly collapsed, and I have never heard of anything else of the same kind. "Complicity" must therefore be taken as implying that Hitler's victims were caught up in some kind of monstrous death-wish, unparalleled and inexplicable. But all the evidence points the other way. The Jews of Europe loved their lives as dearly as anyone else, and tried to survive as best they could. Usually it was hopeless; but wherever they stood a chance some of them succeeded, particularly in countries where large numbers of the non-Jewish population were friendly.

THESE ASPECTS of the Eichmann case are not Miss Arendt's main concern; she wants us to concentrate on the courtroom proceedings in Jerusalem. (Many readers will nonetheless feel that background material which may have been legally irrelevant at the trial itself need not necessarily be morally irrelevant in a book about the trial.) Were there as many "irregularities" and "abnormalities" in the proceedings as she suggests? These are matters which only a qualified jurist could decide; although no doubt under the unique circumstances some technical irregularities were inevitable. In fact the official observer for the International Commission of Jurists reported that "the procedure followed before the District Court and the Supreme Court for the judgment of Eichmann was, generally speaking, the normal procedure laid down by Israeli law for penal cases," adding that "this procedure, which is identical to that under Anglo-Saxon law, guarantees all the fundamental rights of the defence." Other legal observers from outside Israel have written enthusiastically about the fairness with which the trial was conducted.

Miss Arendt's central point is also essentially

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a matter for jurists to debate, but as far as a layman can judge she argues skilfully and makes out a credible case. Her main contention is that, because the prosecution dealt with the Nazi holocaust in general, rather than simply trying to establish the precise limits of Eichmann's personal responsibility, a great deal of irrelevant testimony was admitted and Eichmann was credited with powers which he did not possess. The District Court judges, whom she admires, tried to play down this approach, but it was backed up by the judgment of the Court of Appeal, which stated that Eichmann "was his own superior, and gave all orders in matters that concerned Jewish affairs." This was a complete exaggeration, Miss Arendt argues. Consequently, Eichmann was implicated in the running of extermination-camps, over which he had no control, instead of simply in arranging for deportation to those camps; he was blamed for deportations in regions where they had been organised by other commanders; and the fact that he was acting under directives from above was lost sight of. The Transport Manager was presented as the Director-in-Chief. Had this not been the case, the verdict and sentence would still have been the same; but Eichmann would have had a normal trial instead of a "show trial."

Something along these lines must, I think, be conceded (once again adding the caution that any but an expert legal opinion can only be of limited value). But before we ask exactly what kind of "show-trial" the Eichmann case was, and what justifications, if any, can be made for the "show" element, we must consider the version of Eichmann's activities which emerges from Miss Arendt's book. Where the prosecutor exaggerated, Miss Arendt is determined to scale Eichmann down to size. She sees him largely as an organisation man, mechanically carrying out orders imposed from above, no matter how terrible. But he was, of course, a far more powerful figure than his rank of lieutenant-colonel would suggest. The Nazi chain of command was complicated, but there were certainly not more than half a dozen individuals in the Third Reich from whom he took orders concerning the Jews, all of them (with the possible exception of Mueller, the Gestapo chief) now dead. He was, in other words, a man who gave far more orders than he received. If his name didn't loom very large at Nuremberg, it was for the very reason that the Israelis felt that it was appropriate for them to put him on trial: because his work was exclusively concerned with Jews, not with waging the war as a whole. He may not have been a major actor in the history of Nazism itself, but in the standard literature of the Final Solution (Reitlinger, Poliakov, *et. al.*) he has always been assumed to have been one of the handful of men most deeply implicated in the fate of the Jews. If his role has been somewhat exaggerated, he started the process himself, most notoriously with his boast that "he would leap into his grave laughing because the feeling that he had five million people on his conscience would be for him a source of extraordinary satisfaction." Miss Arendt calls this remark "sheer rodomontade." A nice word, rodomontade, but it hardly meets the present case. We may accept, however, that there was an element of brag in Eichmann's claim; ten years ago Gerald Reitlinger commented that the murders in which Eichmann had a direct hand in fact numbered less than a million.

It must also be remembered that in the major disagreements over policy which broke out near the end of the war Eichmann was on the "hard" side. When Himmler, hoping to do a deal with the West, started trying to slow down the exterminations, it must have been, says Miss Arendt, "a shattering experience" for Eichmann. Not quite as shattering, perhaps, as the experience of the Budapest Jews who, on Eichmann's own initiative and despite the new line, were rounded up at a time when the Russians were already in the city's suburbs and sent on a seven-day march to Austria during which 1,200 of them died, including women aged eighty. Miss Arendt explains that Eichmann tried to sabotage Himmler's orders in Hungary because his conscience forced him to remain loyal to Hitler. This was not fanaticism, however, but "boundless and immoderate admiration for Hitler." I must admit that the distinction escapes me—unless the "fanatical" admirers of Hitler were those like Goebbels who committed suicide in 1945, as opposed to the "boundless and immoderate" admirers like Eichmann who simply did their best to save their skins.

Organising deportations was not the same thing as running concentration-camps, although most of us will feel that the distinction between consigning someone to certain death and actually killing him is a fine one. But the physical circumstances of deportation itself must also be taken into account. Anyone relying solely on Miss Arendt might be forgiven for assuming that for much of the time Eichmann was no more than a glorified station-master. There is barely a trace in her book of the man who told Kastner that he was prepared to pack ninety Ruthenian Jews into a single box-car because "the Jews in those regions were not pretentious." Discussing Eichmann's role in the deportation of 4,000 children (who had been separated from their parents) from Paris to

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Auschwitz, Miss Arendt points out that he had been informed that the proposal to include children under sixteen in the deportations came from Laval himself—something which wasn't mentioned in Jerusalem. Perhaps this slightly lessens Eichmann's guilt. But it might have been worthwhile going on to mention the report (which can be found in Reitlinger, whom I quote) that "in the box-cars, returning empty from Auschwitz, Belgian railwaymen found twenty-five bodies of children, aged between two and four. They had never reached the gas-chamber."

Miss ARENDT'S FINAL assessment of Eichmann's personality is that he was "banal." If she simply means by this that he was not a satanic figure, but one of the most boring and squalid little men who ever lived, few will disagree. Nor was he a Streicher; the prosecution no doubt miscalculated in trying to enlarge on his personal sadism. But "banality" in this context also implies that Eichmann was essentially one of the clerks who kept the wheels turning. Certainly he had many of the attitudes of the classic bureaucrat—but this should not delude us into thinking that he actually *was* a bureaucrat, and nothing more. He might have been one under other circumstances; but the deed changes the man, and he ended up ardently pursuing a career without precedent. Surely his boasting indicates, as much as anything, that he was drunk with power. It was easy to believe in the bureaucrat as one looked at the bespectacled middle-aged man sitting by himself in the glass box at Jerusalem, with his elaborate coloured charts explaining how his department had been administered. Twenty years earlier, surrounded by his henchmen and wearing his SS uniform, he cut a very different figure.

THE HEART of Miss Arendt's indictment is that the Israeli government staged a show-trial. It was an ordinary trial as well, with a just verdict, so "show-trial" carries none of the connotations which it would in the context of a police-state. There is also another important distinction to be drawn. In a totalitarian régime a show-trial is generally staged in order to remove internal opponents of the ruling group or to inaugurate a change of policy. There is no evidence that the Eichmann trial has produced any change in Israeli politics, or lessened Israeli respect for the rule of law. Anyone worried about the future of democracy in Israel would be choosing an extraordinarily roundabout and self-defeating way of raising the issue if he decided to do so in terms of the handling of Eichmann.

Without speculating on other motives which the Israeli authorities may well have had when they went ahead with the trial, I believe that they were justified in trying to bring home to the world the extent and nature of the Nazi holocaust. The coverage in the international press may not have been as extensive as they hoped, but no other event since the war has rubbed in so indelibly what happened to the Jews of occupied Europe. This may have seemed an unnecessary task to those like Miss Arendt who felt during the trial that (in her own words) they "knew by heart all there was to know." Miss Arendt herself is very highly esteemed in many countries for her writings, particularly on the subject of totalitarianism. But it is always easy for the well-informed to forget how ignorant other people can be, or for the deeply involved to forget how much it may take to rouse the uninvolved from apathy. There are no statistics to prove this, but personally I feel convinced that even among educated people there is often only a dim awareness of the events publicised by the Eichmann trial. The violation of ordinary legal procedure is not something to be condoned lightly. The real question is whether it was more shocking than the ignorance which it was meant to correct.

The trial undoubtedly aroused interest as no book, or play, or exhibition could ever have done. There was a price to pay for all this publicity, however. The story was handled with all the crudity of the mass-media, including some lamentable propaganda of the best-selling *Exodus* type. Eichmann was served up to shallow minds as the scapegoat which they are always looking for. It was painful to see a tragedy of such dimensions being vulgarised; but I still believe that the sensationalism was more than off-set by the sheer amount of factual information that was put before the world.

Miss Arendt would say that the vulgarity began in the courtroom itself. She is particularly hostile to the prosecutor, Mr. Hausner, assailing him for his "clichés" and his "cheap rhetoric." (There are clichés and clichés. Miss Arendt's favourite word for describing atrocities, "hair-raising," might be considered rather cheap by some critics.) But even if Mr. Hausner had been a Cicero, there was bound to be an unbridgeable gulf between the proceedings in court and the actions which were being judged. Trying to stage a tragedy may have interfered with the trial; having to hold a trial certainly flattened out the tragedy. An individual witness like Zindel Grynspan might be extraordinarily moving as he told his story: Miss Arendt, relenting for once, praises this "background" witness at length for his naturalness and shining honesty. But in general, as Harold Rosenberg pointed out in a brilliant article which appeared

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in *Commentary* while the trial was still in progress, "as a medium of dramatic narration a trial has basic shortcomings"—and these were very pronounced in the case of the Eichmann proceedings. In Mr. Rosenberg's words, "the law, like other scientific approaches, exaggerates the *neutrality* of what was done.... It all but invites an Eichmann to describe himself as a 'transport officer.'" And it presupposes that even an Eichmann has a "case" to put forward.

THE TRIAL MIGHT nevertheless have come closer to being commensurate with the story which it unfolded if Eichmann had been a different kind of man. But while his actions make it impossible to think of him primarily as "banal," his character didn't altogether suit the role which Mr. Hausner and Mr. Ben-Gurion assigned to him. They were looking for the walking embodiment of anti-semitism: perhaps only Hitler himself would have entirely fitted the part. At any rate, there isn't enough evidence to say that at the outset of his murderous career Eichmann was a compulsive anti-semite, although his head was obviously stuffed with anti-semitic opinions. Initially he may have been a receptive member of Hitler's audience rather than an active campaigner; and the distinction is worth drawing if we are to understand the difference between anti-semitism as a mania and anti-semitism as a factor in European culture (and hence in European politics).

But, it must be stressed again, the deed changes the man. Miss Arendt wants us to remember that Nazism was a state-system, run not by psychopaths but by administrators, civil servants, respectable men sitting in respectable offices. No doubt: but if one wants to illustrate such a thesis, one should cite as an example a civil servant or a clerk, not an Eichmann. For who can think of him now without at the same time thinking of his victims? His ordinariness has been swallowed up by his crimes.

THERE IS ONE LAST problem implicit in her approach which I believe that Miss Arendt, in this book at least, doesn't really face up to. In the name of justice, absolute justice, she is prepared to criticise the conduct of the Eichmann trial, often very bitterly. But surely the absolute justice which demands that a trial should concern itself with the actions of the accused "and nothing else" requires at least as strongly that the guilty should always be brought to account. Now supposing it were possible to try, convict, and punish the innumerable individuals (by no means all of them German, of course, and a few of them Jewish) who were criminally involved in the murder of the European Jews. Such a prospect would obviously be a nightmare; human beings are not Olympians, and none of us are qualified to deal out judgment on that scale. (This is not to condone the situation which actually exists, on the other hand: a state of affairs in which major criminals like the unspeakable Mengele are still at large and others have been allowed to re-establish themselves in positions of great wealth and authority.)

There can be no question of absolute justice where a crime as vast as the murder of six million people is concerned; and the same principle which allows us not to demand a complete reckoning can also allow us to overlook unorthodox procedure in a single unique trial, provided it doesn't materially affect the verdict. Personally I believe that it is a fallacy to hope that we can "learn something" from the Eichmann trial, in the sense of drawing any final moral from the story which wouldn't already be obvious to a child of six. No doubt we need to know much more than we do about Nazism as a historical phenomenon, but the search for moral lessons is a form of cheering ourselves up: we hope that our new knowledge will, in the long run, be at least a tiny redeeming factor. This is an illusion: there will never be any redeeming factors. What the Eichmann trial did succeed in doing was implanting the facts more firmly in millions of minds. There are dangers of dwelling morbidly on this aspect of the past, and when we have really grasped what happened to six million human beings there will perhaps be nothing for us to do except start trying to forget. But it is no use pretending to ourselves that we can "forget" something which we have not yet really tried to remember. To the extent that many of us do now remember at least a little more clearly than we did before, the prosecutor was surely justified when he came before the Jerusalem courtroom as an advocate for the dead.

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The Club Armchair

By Richard Mayne

ONE OF THE COMMODITIES that an Englishman living abroad finds difficult to obtain is a really comfortable armchair. If by good fortune you find it, it's usually described as "an English club." Apparently, continental upholsterers still retain a nostalgic, Wodehousian picture of England as a land of gentlemen's clubs in which peers, statesmen, magnates, and professional men doze behind *The Times* or *Country Life* in great leather armchairs before a blazing grate. For their own compatriots, they provide sterner wares: the chairs they offer are usually of only two kinds. The first is the *bergère*, a satinned survival from the *salon*, with a broad flat seat and padded wooden arms; the second is a functional piece of airport furniture evidently designed for statistical man. Both are frequently hard, and both lack those warm, welcoming depths that enfold and ensconce the occupant against draughts, world disasters, and rainy afternoons.

Mutatis mutandis, the quest for the club armchair is probably familiar to the average reader of novels. The counterpart of the reproduction *bergère* is the product of the lady novelist, male or female—all leisure and fine distinctions, endlessly sensitive and introspectively verbose. The counterpart of airport furniture is the conscientiously far-out novel, experimental, beat, socially exotic, self-consciously gruff or racy. Either, it's true, may turn out to be a rewarding work of art: but the former is usually too flimsy and the latter usually too jagged to satisfy the legitimate demand for "a good read" which was met, *inter alia*, by the great novels of the past. For that, the reader must nowadays go to true-life adventure stories, statesmen's memoirs, popular biographies, war books, detective stories, accounts of travel or of life with unusual animals—to all the standard best-sellers, in fact, that fill the seaside bookshops. Another alternative is provided by the novels of C. P. Snow.

Opening such a novel, in fact, is a little like sinking into a comfortable armchair. The very chapter-headings are reassuring: "A Slip of the Tongue"—"Turns Across the Lawn"—"Mr. March Asks a Question"—"A Good-bye in the Morning"—"A Joyous Moment in the Fog"—"Conference of Six"—"A Piece of Advice"—"The Cost of Knowledge." These, from separate books of the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence, might almost be the titles of Victorian postcards or anecdotal Academy pictures. They recall the books of our childhood—"In which *Endeavour* sights land and I beard the Tiger." They promise solid craftsmanship by an author who knows where he's going, who won't let us down. The same is true of Snow's prose, deliberate, clear, matter-of-fact and honest—no flights of fancy, but a steady march. And Snow's characters have the same stamp: there's something settled about them, an atmosphere of mahogany and waistcoats that's familiar in a curious way. It's not that one's necessarily met their equivalents in real life: the familiarity surely comes from books. Somewhere, somehow, we've met this atmosphere, these characters before. Dickens? Thackeray? Trollope? Galsworthy? Arnold Bennett? None of the past writers to whom Snow has been likened quite fits the bill. Where, then, did we first encounter these successful barristers, doctors, dons—these heavy men of monumental manner, powerful, well-thought-of, rather stately—the rightful occupants of the club armchair? Once seen, the answer's obvious: in pre-war detective and ghost stories. Theirs were the heroes who lived in "chambers," who had men-servants, who met in clubs, who'd "made a name for themselves," who had plenty of leisure, and whose sober masculinity was presumably intended by their creators as a suitable contrast to gory, ghoulish, and incredible events.

IT WAS PERHAPS no coincidence that Snow's first published novel was indeed a detective story of this type. This was *Death Under Sail*, first issued in 1932. Revising it for republication in 1959,[1] Snow wrote a brief preface in which he confessed that "why I started with a detective story is obscure to me now and would have been so at the time." "If I had another life-time to play with," he continued, "...I should have liked to write some more detective stories....I should have had a shot at the real *roman policier*, bringing the story as near to a realistic novel as I could. No one, not

[1] It has been re-issued this year by Penguin Books at 3s. 6d.

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even Simenon, has done quite what I should like to see. I believe that the field is still wide open."

Indeed it is. *Death Under Sail*, as Snow admits, is "a stylised, artificial detective story very much in the manner of the day." The "death" takes place in a wherry sailing on the Norfolk Broads: its surprisingly capacious cabin-space is filled with well-assorted suspects; there's a rather pompous all-seeing detective, and a clever but comic policeman; there are ample motives everywhere, false trails, and colourful clues; there's a surprise ending and the usual explanations. In revising it, Snow has pruned some of its "artificiality," removing some atmospheric omission dots, cutting some of his detective's and his narrator's moralising, suppressing a few passages of 1930s fine writing, and—U or non-U? I forget which—substituting "sitting-room" for "lounge." But what's surprising is how little he has apparently felt the need to alter, and how close the book is to the world of his other novels.

Partly, no doubt, this is a matter of technique. The chapter-headings could be transplanted almost bodily into the *Strangers and Brothers* books: "Six Pleasant People"—"Five Questions by Finbow"—"Uneasy Morning." So could much of the prose, with its plain adroitness, its measured conversation, and its crisp curtain-line at the end of every chapter: only a faint facetiousness, curbed by the 1959 revision, reveals that "Ian Capel," the narrator, isn't "Lewis Eliot." More germane, however, is the resemblance between some of the characters and themes of *Death Under Sail* and those of later books.

Snow was only twenty-seven when it was first published: but he made his narrator a man of fifty-three. For the revised edition, this age has been increased by ten years: but even fifty-three was a far enough cry from youth when the book was written. What's more, the victim in the story already seems to be at home in the corridors of power. "I knew of his growing fame. He had planted a foot successfully in Harley Street, and was spoken of among doctors as the best man in his own line of his generation." The narrator, for his part, is described as "a well-known clubman," and another of the characters is "son of the Newcastle shipping magnate." Routine stuff, one might say, for a Thirties whodunit: but not far from the seriously intended world of the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence.

Moreover, the path into that world was already indicated in *Death Under Sail*. "... Though William was not yet thirty, there was a confidence and directness about his thinking, and a fixed ambition under his impassive

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manner, that marked him as destined for whatever heights he chose." 'William' was a young doctor engaged in medical research; and it may not be impertinent to recall that at this time Snow himself was a young Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, working on molecular physics. The world of research, as anyone knows who has scaled even the lowest rungs of the academic ladder, is by no means the amalgam of dreaming spires and other-worldly eccentricities that it may have been when youthful dons enjoyed private incomes: to the pure excitements and worries of the quest itself are now added financial anxieties, the fear of rivals, and the torment of wondering whether this is, after all, the work that one's fitted to do. The life of the research worker, moreover, is peculiarly lonely, since the nature of his task—reconnoitring alone beyond the frontiers of knowledge—ensures that only a handful of people in the whole world really know what he's doing. And for this reason, he himself is subject to many tensions and temptations: like the artist, he has to invent his own standards, and live up to them. The rewards, however, are very great—not only the sense of accomplishment and intellectual self-respect, but also worldly prizes and what Snow's characters often call "success."

Clearly, these are tempting themes for any novelist. Even in *Death Under Sail*, some of them are adumbrated. One of the possible motives for murdering the victim is the fact that he has stolen the credit for some joint research of which his partner has done the lion's share. An identical situation recurs in *The Light and the Dark*, and something similar becomes the centre of *The Affair*, the most detective-story-like of Snow's later books. A cognate theme, moreover, figures in *The Search*, the *Bildungsroman* which was published two years after *Death Under Sail*, and which in the revised version issued in 1958 is surely the most satisfying of all Snow's novels.

Writing of it at the time of its re-issue, Snow was curiously diffident, calling it "partially successful" and explaining that in the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence he wished to say "something about people first and foremost, and then people-in-society, in a quite different way, and at a quite different level from anything in this book." He implied that *The Search* was a simpler, more superficial novel. Less ambitious it certainly is, recounting the spoiled "career" of a pure scientist who, Snow says, is far more "single-minded" than he himself, since "I... knew my own ultimate vocation from the time I was about eighteen." But even the hero of *The Search* is described by one of its other characters as "detached," a man who "never lets himself quite go"; and it's the tension between this unscientific detachment—the tug of desires other than that for knowledge—and the rapt devotion of the "pure scientist" that makes the book live. One of its sections, indeed, is entitled "The Track of Ambition." Research, indeed, is one possible path to "success."

The mixture of motives implied here is important, moreover, to an understanding of Snow's position—as distinct from his non-fictional pronouncements—on what he probably regrets having called "The Two Cultures." In a painstaking study of his writings, the American critic Frederick R. Karl seems to have simplified even further the over-simplification made by Snow himself in his Rede Lecture of that title and justifiably if intemperately demolished by Dr. F. R. Leavis.[2] Ignoring the Reformation, *"novi-homines"* echo of the title *The New Men*, Karl ascribes to Snow the belief that scientists are "a new race of men" who can "save us from destruction." "In literature," says Karl, "he deplores the humanists who are concerned with sickness, while he praises the scientists, who are concerned with health." It can't be denied that Snow has attributed some cardinal virtues to practitioners of the natural sciences, and has deplored the fact that—in Britain, at least—there's a lack of *rapport* between them and their colleagues in other disciplines. But a *credo* as naïve as that reported by Karl would be strange indeed in one who in his Godkin Lectures on *Science and Government* chronicled so effectively the follies to which a scientist may stoop. Nor, I think, would it be reasonable to regard Snow as an accredited spokesman of "science" spreading the gospel among the heathen humanists. One of the physicists who worked on the wartime nuclear project which is supposed to have inspired *The New Men* once told me how unimpressed he was by the verisimilitude, or lack of it, in Snow's novel. Indeed, it doesn't pretend to be reportage, still less propaganda. *The Search*, in fact, seems to me to validate far more convincingly Snow's right to speak as one who has enjoyed scientific experience. Here, one feels the passion that animates the research worker; and the fact that this passion is impure, that the "scientist" is "human," helps to substantiate the book.

BUT IT'S IN the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence, of course, that Snow is most explicitly concerned with "humanity"—with "people first and foremost, and then people-in-society." This dichotomy, like all such distinc-

[2] *C. P. Snow: The Politics of Conscience*. By FREDERICK R. KARL. Southern Illinois University Press, $4.50.

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tions, is rather artificial unless the word "society" be taken to mean more than just "the group," something more like "organised society," or even "high society." In fact, Snow has never attempted in any one novel a panoptic survey of "society" as a whole: but the distinction nevertheless corresponds to a broad difference, in the *Strangers and Brothers* novels, between those that continue the *bildungsroman* tradition of *The Search*, recounting the careers of Lewis Eliot and his friends (*Strangers and Brothers, Time of Hope, The Light and the Dark, Homecomings*), and those which portray successive sub-groups within "society," perhaps in an attempt either to mirror it in miniature or to traverse its successive aspects—a university College in *The Masters* and *The Affair*, the world of well-to-do Jewry in *The Conscience of the Rich*, or a closed community of scientists in *The New Men*.

On the whole, and with specific exceptions on either side, the former group seems to me the more rewarding. *Time of Hope* and *Strangers and Brothers*, in particular, communicate very vividly the ambition for "success": in this sense, they're both more and a little less than specimens of the *Bildungsroman*, since they're concerned not only with the formation of character but with the need "to make one's way in the world" in a quite material sense. The early scenes from *Time of Hope* portraying the anxieties and humiliations of a clever boy torn between home and school are very convincing, and explain some of the less attractive aspects of Lewis Eliot's character—his timidity, his conformism, his compulsion towards "success." There's a Wellsian, Dickensian feeling about Eliot's desperation when his health fails him: the world is harsh and competitive, and others are waiting to take the place for which his whole life has been a struggle. This feeling heightens the sense of disaster when George Passant, Eliot's friend and mentor in *Strangers and Brothers*, is disgraced in that book and later done down in *Homecomings*: but it also shows why Eliot equivocates about helping him. These, one feels, are real people, sentient beings in the grip of separate but cognate daemons—pride in the case of Passant, desperate ambition in Eliot's.

And yet—even here—there are inadequacies. The desperation of the Wellsian or Dickensian hero, struggling to escape from the draper's shop or the blacking factory, has a certain vulgarity about it, due to selfishness or self-pity: yet Wells's sense of humour, and Dickens's sense of proportion, shown in the scenes of remorse in *Great Expectations*, redeem the fail-

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SUICIDE OF A NATION?

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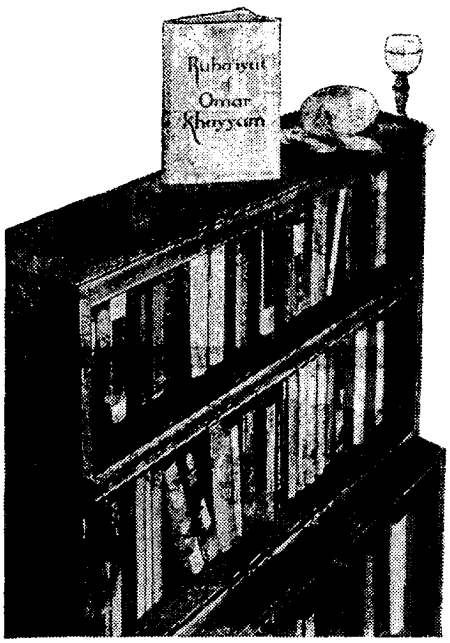
ings of their heroes. But Lewis Eliot remains grimly committed to his career, and the notion of "success" remains uncriticised. True, in *The Light and the Dark*, the highly "successful" Roy Calvert is shown as dissatisfied and manic-depressive despite his academic *kudos* and sexual conquests: but Calvert remains a lay-figure, a lady-novelist's hero adored by Eliot and correspondingly unrealised. Eliot, one feels, would have *enjoyed* all the things that drive Calvert to his unexplained despair: the tragedy, if such it is, lies in the lack of an explanation. And if, in *Homecomings*, Eliot himself is shown as the victim of personal disaster for which he's partly responsible, his own reactions remain as obscure to the reader as his wife's neurosis seems to him. It may be that all these are thoughts and feelings that "lie too deep for words": but the business of the novelist is to overcome such problems. In these two books, it's hard to feel that Snow has done so.

In Part V of his Appendix to the Godkin Lectures, Snow defends himself against the charge that in telling the story of Tizard and Lindemann his "novelist's imagination" had led him to set the issue "in terms too black and white." His critics, he said,

> must have forgotten what my novels are really like. Take this situation. A is a man almost universally popular with his professional colleagues; B is, on the contrary, very widely distrusted and disliked. They are put in the middle of major decisions. A turns out to be almost invariably right; B is, on the contrary, singularly and often perversely wrong. I ask mildly: does that sound like a situation from any piece of fiction that I have written or am ever likely to write? In fiction, of course, I should have played every kind of finesse. By the time I had finished you wouldn't have known which was liked and which was disliked: you certainly wouldn't have known which was right and which was wrong.

In a sense, this is merely saying that truth is often more banal than fiction can afford to be; and no doubt an element of "finesse" enters into every work of art. "Paint falsely," said Degas, "then add the accent of nature." Nevertheless, with all allowances made for a hypothetical example, the conception of character implied here is very much shallower than that revealed in the *Bildungsroman* novels from the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence. And if even those novels have weaknesses, the people-in-society novels are in these same respects weaker still.

THE BEST OF THEM, certainly, is *The Conscience of the Rich*. Here, the Jewish family which fills the centre of the stage is



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realised, as a family, with the same vividness as the family in *Time of Hope*: the mere spectacle of this strange, isolated community has clearly kindled Snow's imagination. Social issues, personal histories, and characters-in-conflict are integrated, here, in a dynamic and natural whole. More than this, in the character of Leonard March, Snow comes closer than anywhere else to an effective presentation of the vanity of "success." But ultimately, the novel is affirmative; and its weaknesses lie in its mode of affirmation. Imaginatively, Leonard March makes far more impact than Eliot: but Eliot, shadowy against the vivid March family, has to bear the burden of hope that Leonard March rejects. As sometimes in the later novels of Conrad, the author's brain seems to be vainly repeating what his heart denies.

No SUCH CONFLICTS, on the other hand, trouble the remainder of the people-in-society novels. Conflicts there certainly are, of course: but they're played out in the bright arena of consciousness. Each, in some respects, is a novel of conscience: but each is a problem-novel with affinities to the detective story. *The New Men* adds nothing, artistically, to the tragedy of a Fuchs, a Pontecorvo, or a Nunn May: all the elements are there in the true stories, and all that the novel does is to rearrange them together with the familiar Snow theme of research-*v.*-career. *The Masters* is a fascinating suspense-story with well-drawn but essentially unchanging characters: it seems to be finessed in much the same way as Snow's hypothetical example of A and B. And if *The Masters* is in this sense artificial, the same is true *a fortiori* of *The Affair*. Again, the suspense is fascinating: but this time there are signs of labouring, of slight portentousness, of making comments over-explicitly where no comment is needed. "I was thinking—uncomfortably, for I had an affection for Tom and was getting concerned for him—that subtle men like him would be wiser not to play at politics." The comment, in a rather unsubtle book, might seem like self-defence against just this kind of criticism: but it also introduces a strength and a virtue in Snow that purely "literary" appraisal of his work may be in danger of missing.

One reviewer, commenting on the *Strangers and Brothers* sequence, coined the phrase "the poetry of power." Snow's next novel is said to be entitled *The Corridors of Power*. And the mechanics of power in boards and committees he has certainly delineated in a way that hasn't been seen in the English novel since Trollope. The election manœuvres in *The Masters*, the trial scenes in *The Affair*, the committee-rooms

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of *Homecomings*—these stand out as Snow's distinctive and unique contribution to the understanding of our time. Anyone who has been involved in similar proceedings, in College politics, in party meetings, or in international negotiations, can vouch for the authenticity of Snow's wily reporting. In a sense, I suppose, this is power—although it's not always exercised in corridors or even in committees. But is it "the poetry of power"? The phrase, if it means anything, must surely imply a certain irony. What is power, and why do men seek it? Does its exercise give the satisfaction that they hoped? In a modern society, has it any meaning? Or is it so divided and confined that even a President, even a dictator, may find himself curiously impotent, reduced to manipulating or to intrigue, committed willy-nilly to the role which history has forced on him? Does power remove fear? Does it make death less terrible? Does it ever replace the things or the people that had to be sacrificed to achieve it? This is the kind of question that any "poetry of power"—Shakespeare's, for instance, or Goethe's—must surely face. No one, I think, would claim that Snow's main achievements lie in this direction. Some sense of tragedy evidently moves him: "For to Martin it was jet-clear that, despite its emollients and its joys, individual life was tragic: a man was ineluctably alone, and it was a short way to the grave." (*The New Men*) This lends some perspective to the theme of "success" and ambition: it casts an ironic shadow over "Lewis Eliot." And yet the irony isn't all-pervasive—the tragedy, somehow, isn't felt. Where, then, is the strength which I think one can still identify in Snow's work?

With much of this one can agree: but at the risk of sounding stuffy I'd like to question, finally, some of its assumptions. There's no denying that Snow's novels suffer from grave defects: comparison with Camus or Conrad is clearly quite out of place. Nor can one deny that Snow's work lacks a dimension of depth and subtlety that's not supplied by the reminder that "we die alone." There's little sense of evil; there's little communication of the irrational, as distinct from description of its effects; there's little analysis of success; there's little sense of humour; and there are serious *lacunæ* in many of the central characters. But when all this is said, something remains. At a time when serious literature seems to have diverged further and further from most people's experiences of everyday life, and when the one world which is not found in novels is the world in which large numbers of literate people live and work, Snow —in however ponderous a fashion—seems to be doing his honest best to repair the omission. The attempt is not negligible: it even has a certain nobility.

Dismissing *The Affair* as the comparative failure which it undoubtedly is, Karl remarks: "Skeffington, for instance, the man who pursues the case with single-minded energy, is a relic of British justice, a man who inexplicably fights for what he knows to be correct even though he despises the object of his struggle"—i.e., an unsavoury but probably innocent man. With all due respect, there are quite a few such "relics" around the place who still live up to these laughably archaic notions of how to behave. You can even sometimes see them sitting in the club armchair.

FREDERICK KARL, in the study already quoted, contrasts Snow with what he calls "the existential writer—Kafka, Beckett, Camus, Sartre, and Conrad." For such a writer, "the will is baffled at every turn, until the individual virtually gives it up." Not everyone would thus dismiss some of the positive affirmations to be found in Camus and Conrad—or indeed in Beckett: but the picture is familiar enough. "Snow's view of modern man," on the other hand, "is close to the way most people like to see themselves; that is, as buffeted by forces they do not understand, but forces nevertheless which they believe they can overcome. . . ." Karl goes on to claim that what he calls the "prophets of doom" are "generally the major" writers, taught in colleges and passed down "from one generation to another for interpretation and analysis." "The distinction that we make," he concludes, "must be at Snow's expense."

Survival of the Classics

The Poetry of Edmund Spenser. By WILLIAM NELSON. *Columbia*, 45s.

Milton's Grand Style. By CHRISTOPHER RICKS. *Oxford*, 25s.

WE SEEM to be in a difficult if not desperate position *vis-à-vis* the heroic poets of the language; constricted by a poetic both narrow and ambitious, most modern practitioners and readers share the Alexandrian assumption that there is nothing much to be had from such conventional classics as Spenser and Milton. It is curious and sad that some of the responsibility for this state of affairs must fall to precisely those people who, in a specialised epoch, are

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paid to study the classics, and to keep them alive and active. In fact the opponents of Spenser and Milton have been more influential critics than their defenders, and have been heard outside the classroom. Those who think Milton important probably read him better than those who don't, but too often address only believers, assuming common language and interests, and missing the attention of the wider public.

There is surely a *prima facie* case for thinking that a poetic tradition is impoverished by the neglect of poets formerly, and during great periods, held to be masters. For Spenser, however, it would take a bold critic to predict any real revival at present, since his strength is of a sort that can be shown, but not easily shown to be relevant. His real authority didn't survive a loss of intelligibility; the eighteenth-century critics, especially perhaps Upton, were the last to have anything like an easy insight into his shifting mass of meanings. The idea of a poem made up of variant commonplaces but creating, by its extent and the complexity of its interrelations, new and inexhaustible fields of significance, was lost. Something rather more like it than is commonly thought was re-invented by Pound, Eliot and Joyce; but Spenser has not the modern abruptness in collocating images, and he rarely aims at verbal intensity. We therefore lose sight of the truth that *The Faerie Queene* is a poem of what Mr. Eliot, speaking of Dante, calls "the high dream"—it uses the stuff of the world for occult explanations of the nature of man.

HOW CAN SUCH A POEM, in the ordinary sense, survive? Few can hope to achieve the right kind of learning to read it with any fullness, let alone dispose of that learning with the casual ease of Upton, not to speak of the "right" Elizabethan reader (who, unhappily, left no commentary). A bold attempt to develop its dream-aspect in modern terms was recently made by Graham Hough. More usually the professional expositor risks losing his non-professional audience and brings to bear on the poem a knowledge of Renaissance narrative and emblematic procedures, and an antiquarian's familiarity with the thought of that period. Most of the first-rate modern work in this field has been American, very academic in tone, and often oversubtle. Considered as scholarship, it adds up to an impressive achievement, and within its limits it has considerable power and variety; but it is certainly very specialised.

Professor Nelson's book, rather surprisingly, is the first general critical study of the poet for thirty years, but this mustn't be taken to imply

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scholarly neglect; there have been many books on the big poem, and quite a few on the minor ones. Nelson includes a sober account of Spenser's life, and deals systematically with the minor poems; he applies to them a grave and matured knowledge, and is unwilling, perhaps too unwilling, to be seduced by some current bright ideas. He admits from the outset that Spenser's gifts have less to do with the verbally exciting than with an unusual control of the relevance of apparently disparate materials ("well grounded, firmly framed, and strongly trussed up together," as the first commentator, E.K., put it). Nelson is wherever possible uncomplicated, as when he cuts through the snarl of arguments about Spenser's Platonism (on the *Four Hymns*, for instance, and the *Garden of Adonis*) and expounds the difficult passages by direct reference to Plotinus. He is far too experienced a scholar ever to accept purely conventional explanations, and this makes him interesting on the *Amoretti*. But his deepest interest is reserved for *The Faerie Queene*.

The introductory chapter on the great poem, with its expert study of the deep Virgilian influence and of the variety of the "dark conceit," seems to me admirable, though perhaps only for readers already committed to the poem. In the rest of the book, which has a chapter apiece on each of the seven books extant, Nelson doesn't try to summarise all the available commentary, and in fact offers a great many original insights and much luminous comment, especially on the great First Book. It gave me a strong impression of the immense variety of Spenser's poem that I found this chapter so absorbing, because what chiefly interests me about it is the elaborate and complex invention of a sort of English nationalist apocalypse, and Nelson rather perfunctorily deals with this in a few concluding paragraphs, when he has had his own say. Throughout he has a preference for the simplest explanation, and this may seem a good principle, but it can make you leave out a lot in an account of such a weirdly various and ambitious poem, and occasionally Nelson makes the work seem less exciting than it is. I doubt if he will make many converts, but he has certainly written an excellent book for Spenserians.

THE POINT made about Spenser—that he offers little to critics intent on teasing out verbal ingenuities— is one that might well be applied, by friend and enemy alike, to Milton. But Christopher Ricks boldly asserts, and finely justifies his assertion, that Milton requires precisely this kind of attention. This is an important book, since the rejection of Milton has been a much more explicit affair than that of Spenser, and is, negatively, associated with the establishment of modern "bearings" in poetry. Ricks believes the way to defend Milton is to counter-attack on the ground chosen by the enemy; for instance, to refute the charge of Dr. Leavis that Milton exhibits "a callousness to the intrinsic nature of English," and the widely held belief that the Grand Style, which used to be thought admirable, is in fact unforgivably rigid and inexpressive, an outrage on the genius of the language. In our own time, says Ricks, Professor Empson has recovered a sense of the extreme subtlety of Milton's language which was common among eighteenth-century critics; and taking this side, he sets out to show that "Milton's style *does* command nervous energy, subtle involutions . . . linguistic daring;" that, far from "renouncing the English language," Milton combines grandeur with pregnancy and surprise, is not only gigantic but subtle and witty, not only powerful but delicate. His theme offered him extraordinary opportunities to exploit the power of syntax to suggest contrary meanings, and the ability of words to propose original as well as current significations; he accepted them.

Ricks makes subtle and original use of eighteenth-century and modern criticism (often proceeding by means of commentary upon other critics whether supporters or opponents) but the main business of this well-composed book is naturally in the analysis of particular passages. This is done with a steady brilliance the more admirable since Ricks so rarely pursues a bright idea too far. The riches are certainly there, as Richardson said, for anybody who will dig for them, "oftentimes pretty far below the surface." In this book you can see passages recently censured as lacking in intellect or delicacy triumphantly justified; and I am particularly grateful for some points on the syntax. To give a rather simple instance, consider the comma in

> *all things smil'd,*
> *With fragrance and with joy my heart oreflow'd.*

The Ricksian analysis of this establishes not only the forward- and backward-looking function of "with fragrance and with joy," but the importance of this kind of fluidity for the general theme of the poem. In the same way the Latinate word-order used by Milton causes rich syntactic duplicities in *English*. Another instance, ingeniously examined by Ricks, is the account of Eve as she

> *strews the ground*
> *With Rose and Odours from the shrub unfum'd.*

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"The actual sequence—strews the ground with odours—makes the scents magically visible." Actually this little rhetorical trick was so common in the language of the time (in Shakespeare, for instance) that you can hardly call it Latinate, but so strongly did Milton establish, by Latinism and in other ways, a principle of syntactic fluidity, that Ricks is quite right to suppose Milton to have been stretching syntax to get a special sensuous effect in this line.

IT IS CHARACTERISTIC of the sanity of this book that Ricks also notices the frequency with which Milton actually does use the natural word order, to give value to the occasions when he doesn't; he might have added that too many of Milton's opponents choose (even if, as he shows, they choose unwisely) passages from the first two books to make their point about his inflexibility, without regard to the special strategy of the verse in those books: they have to do with false art and fallen angels. Anyway, syntactic variety isn't at all Ricks's only concern; he is very good on the use of original or etymological senses, for instance, and especially when Milton can be shown to exploit both the unfallen and fallen senses of a word (he says that the Fall "infected" language too). Thus he plays on such words as "luxurious," and more profoundly on "taste" and "distaste." Here Ricks's comments really do illuminate the whole poem. He has a final chapter on the similes which consolidates the best modern studies and breaks interesting new ground too. In fact he has, in a short book, revitalised the study of the language of *Paradise Lost*. I won't say I've nothing against him—a few irritating locutions recur too often, and, in a more general way, one perhaps misses a certain resonance, a quality he has not taken over from his master Empson. Some may feel that the argument, though extremely well organised, sticks too close to other commentators, somewhat neglects the structural qualities of the poem, addresses too small an audience. But one can still say that Ricks has gone a long way towards restoring the ruins of our critical parents, and enabling us to see Milton aright. We can now speak of a linguistic and syntactic power specifically Miltonic, and not the worse for being un-Shakespearean—a self-evident truth to the eighteenth-century commentators, but now to be recovered, like the sense of Spenser's dream-world.

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The View from Miami

By Irving Kristol

SUNNING MYSELF on Miami Beach, trying to work up the energy to read the three books* on England's present discontents that ENCOUNTER has sent me, I leafed idly through the New York *Times* and noticed a news report from London. It seems that someone wishes to change the names of London's boroughs, that Professor Geoffrey Tillotson has declared that Dr. Johnson (1709–1784) would have been horrified by the proposed changes, that Wolf Mankowitz is in fact horrified, and that, in short, there's a nice little tempest brewing in this distant teapot. Now, I do not want to get caught up in the conflict of these passions. But I cannot help thinking that if, in Miami, the powers-that-be decided to sink the entire seaboard under thirty feet of water, as a matter of convenience for the customer's motorboats, there would be considerably less argument. Here, people simply *adore* novelty, especially when it holds out the promise of a more-or-less honest buck, but also for its own sake and the general hell of it. And, having at last read my three books, I am in a frame of mind to believe that this says something in favour of Miami.

Miami represents everything in the way of bold self-gratification that Britain instinctively denies. Its glamour is semi-fraudulent, I concede, and its vulgarity has to be seen to be believed. But the luxury is real enough—at the Hotel Fontainebleau (pronounced Fountain-blue) you do go ice-skating in the summertime, you do have expensively-carpeted and lavishly furnished rooms, you do have a masseur at your disposal, you do get Lobsters Newburgh for dinner. And all this—during the summer months, in any case—at a price within the reach of a middle-class American pocketbook. Miami aims, not merely to please, but to provide the most fanciful satisfactions. To-day's de luxe hotel will have to be torn down in ten years because it will no longer be extravagant enough to suit the public's taste. It is madness, in a way; it is laughable, in a way; it is even pitiable, in a way; but, in a way, it is also exhilarating. And so unlike dear old Brighton.

America doubtless suffers from too much Miami on the brain. Britain, however, seems to suffer even more gravely from too much Brighton in the soul. The symptoms of this disease show up in all sorts of unexpected places. In higher education, for instance. I have followed with fascinated incredulity the heated controversy over the predominance of Oxford and Cambridge in British university life, and have studied with bewildered admiration the various ingenious schemes proposed by Peter Laslett and others to cope with it. My incredulity and bewilderment derive from the fact, obvious to every outsider, that this problem, so far from being a tough one, is actually susceptible to easy and relatively quick solution. If you want the provincial universities to overcome their initial handicap and fairly compete with Oxbridge, then you must discriminate in their favour by paying their faculties higher salaries, giving their students more commodious living quarters, dressing up their campuses with superior amenities, providing their graduate students with more generous grants, etc. etc. In short, what is needed is nothing more far-fetched than the expense of money—and the will to spend it in a certain way.

Not that Britain is really deficient in the will to change. It is just that this will, at the moment, appears to be completely absorbed by the reforming, egalitarian spirit—a spirit which is corrective and retributive, rather than expansive. It is incontestably to Britain's moral credit that so much compassionate energy should be directed toward demanding better housing, higher old-age pensions, more civilised treatment of homosexuals, unwed mothers, delinquents, and the like. And the rest of the English-speaking world is grateful for the witty and satirical assaults upon established authority at which your young people seem to excel. Nevertheless, one can have too much of both high-minded self-correction and low-minded self-mockery. After all, whatever the defects of social welfare and political management in Britain to-day, they are still such that other nations regard them with considerable respect. One therefore wonders whether the intensity

* *Great Britain or Little England?* By JOHN MANDER. Penguin Special, 3s. 6d. *A State of England.* By ANTHONY HARTLEY. Hutchinson, 25s. *The Outriders: A Liberal View of Britain.* By JAMES MORRIS. Faber & Faber, 15s.

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of this kind of self-criticism is not, perhaps, a form of masochistic escapism—an inward-turning of the spirit, a self-absorption, born of self-hatred that is itself a kind of self-love. Social justice is certainly a good thing; but when it comes to be regarded as the only good thing, one is on the verge of monomania.

There are two more points to be made about the evangelical egalitarian temper that now is the most active force against the traditional inertia of John Bull. First, its success is likely to be limited, since social welfare in modern societies is more frequently achieved by the creation of more wealth than by the more equal distribution of existing wealth—and the climate of public opinion favourable to the creation of wealth is markedly different from that which is obsessed with its precisely just allocation. Secondly, there is about this fervent egalitarianism a disagreeable aura of sour resentment. One sometimes gets the impression that Professor Titmuss and his disciples are more interested in making the rich miserable than in making the poor happy. There are times, even, when they act as if making the rich miserable were identical with making the poor happy. This is, of course, an error, as poor people well know even if academic ideologues do not. But it is an error which, if widely enough believed by ambitious politicians, can give rise to an enormous amount of mischief.

WITH THESE MOODY THOUGHTS in mind, I dutifully read my three books, and was pleased to find in them a welcome relief. Each is, in its own way, excellent. More important, each strikes a refreshingly positive note. I should like to think that their near simultaneous appearance represents something more than an accident of publishing.

Mr. Mander's *Great Britain or Little England?* concentrates on foreign affairs. Primarily, he has written a polemic against the quasi-neutralism that, to one degree or another, infects both popular and informed opinion—an attitude that reveals itself in intermittent outbursts of anti-American and anti-German feelings, in a more kindly view of Communist intentions than the evidence calls for, in a mainly rhetorical devotion to a largely imaginary Commonwealth, and in a fantastic ambition on the part of British diplomacy to be the clever mediator between Britain's friends and Britain's enemies. But Mr. Mander's book is by no means an official NATO apologia, or anything remotely like it. It is full of provocative and heterodox opinions—on the Bomb, on de Gaulle, on the uncommitted nations—all pungently expressed and cogently argued. This is the best work on any country's foreign policy I have read in

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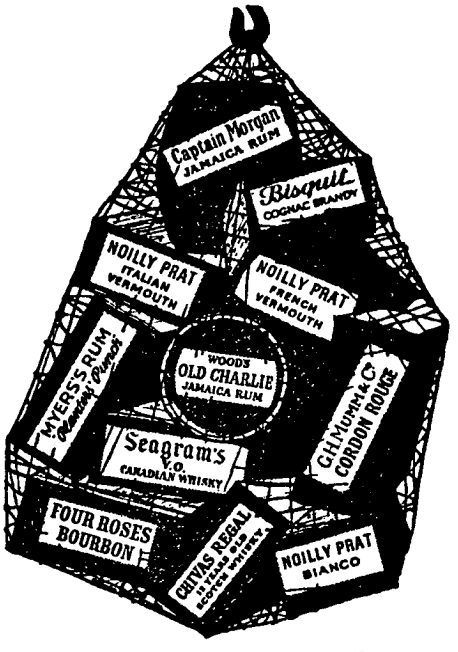

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years. The title itself is more than catchy: it refers to Mr. Mander's conviction that neutralism and Little Englandism are two sides of the same coin, and that only a Great Britain that is part of a Greater Europe offers the hope of curing the nation of its political malaise and its sociological melancholia.

Anthony Hartley's *A State of England* takes issue with those who, wittingly or not, act as the intellectual spokesmen for Little England. The British nation he sees as having experienced two major traumas in the two last decades: the loss of world power and the advent of the Welfare State. He is not nostalgic or regretful about either of these happenings, but he does perceive that the promise of liberation they both held out has not been unfulfilled, with the result that the liberal humanitarian of yesterday has become the liberal misanthrope of to-day. Britain shorn of its empire is merely smaller, not nobler or more beautiful or more admirable; and the Welfare State, for all its accomplishments, seems to encourage a niggling, bureaucratic, and mean approach to all problems of high policy, whether these be cultural, social, economic or political. It is not surprising, then, that the liberal-left intellectuals who were in the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism and domestic injustice should turn to rend their creation with scorn and contempt. It is to these intellectuals that Mr. Hartley's work is above all addressed, in an attempt to persuade them to a more rational and responsible reckoning of the national accounts. His discussions of education, organised politics, and popular culture are thoughtful and well-balanced. His personal tone is engaging in its candour. And like Mr. Mander, he concludes by seeing the English future intimately linked to a larger European destiny.

James Morris' *The Outriders* is a slighter affair, a pamphlet rather than a book. It is a kind of informal Liberal manifesto, and when it gets involved in programmatic specifics, it tends to share the intellectual flabbiness that is (in my view, anyway) characteristic of the Liberal creed. But it is impossible for Mr. Morris to write badly or ineffectually, and most of *The Outriders* is very good indeed. To begin with, it is high-spirited: Mr. Morris sincerely believes that being an Englishman is (or ought to be) a pleasure, as well as a stroke of great good fortune. He not only loves the island; he actually—what is more rare—likes it. He is fed up with self-questioning and self-doubting and self-recriminating and self-abasing, and utters a call to enterprise and adventure that is as eloquent as it is—yes, uplifting:

> We are the outriders of Europe, the open end, poised precariously between the American lan-

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> guage and the continent of Europe, in a frame and geography not quite like anyone else's. This is a curious, invigorating and entertaining state of affairs, and it is precisely the stimulus of our island condition that has made us, in the past, one of the most successful of peoples, evolving a civilisation that remains recognisably our own, exporting our notions to the far corners of the earth, and elevating our language to be one of the universal tongues. It has been good for us, and fun....

Inevitably, Mr. Morris too sees the British adventure of the future as merging into a greater European enterprise.

THE UNANIMITY of these commentators on the subject of Britain's going into Europe I take to signify that such a development is an eventual certainty. (To tell the truth, I have thought this all along.) It would bode well for the prospects of all of us if, as now is beginning to seem conceivable, the act were contemplated cheerfully and gladly, not grudgingly as hitherto, with one eye fixed on the cheque-book. But, for the present, Britain is outside Europe and may be there for several years. How is it to busy itself in the meantime?

Well, one of the nice things about not being a great power is that one has a freedom of action that is otherwise prohibited. Unfortunately, British statesmen and spokesmen insist on pretending that this freedom does not exist. It is not that they deceive themselves about their importance. Rather they have ingrained habits—of reasonableness, of civility, of decorum—that are uncontrollable. So they make cautious and prudent speeches at the U.N. which no one pays any attention to, when they could be making outrageously frank speeches that would at least relieve the tedium which is the U.N.'s natural atmosphere and give British diplomacy a style and a dash it sadly lacks.

In domestic matters, if Britain really wishes to avoid becoming a greater Sweden, the one thing it dare not be is boring. Even if they transgress the ideology of "fair shares," there are little things that might make life more exciting both for individuals and the collectivity. Like tripling the salaries of all scientists and hiring Americans away from M.I.T.; or whittling away at the progressive income tax and encouraging more people to earn more money; or training some thug to win the world heavyweight championship; or—what I mean is, *do something*. I was disappointed that George Brown did not become leader of the Labour Party, for I am told that he is an unpredictable man given to sudden fits of temper and indiscretion—just the sort of leader, it seems to me, that Britain needs at this juncture. I still have some hopes for Lord Hailsham, though they are slowly wilting. The voice of the nanny is whinnying through the land, and what Christine Keeler begins, Lord Denning finishes.

Imperial Britain was the creation of a small, aristocratic class. It is not fashionable to say anything kind about that class, but the fact remains that the nation is governed *meant* something in the eyes of the world—something quite unique and rather marvellous. Whether the democratic Britain that has emerged since the war—or, if one insists, is emerging—will have any such meaning, is *the* question of British politics to-day. Little England might, in the end, be a perfectly decent place for little Englishmen to live in. For the rest of us, it would signify an irreparable loss.

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Memory Unlimited

I JUMPED into the first railway compartment which seemed empty; my eyes fell on a book left on the seat opposite by a previous passenger.

I took it up absent-mindedly and ran through the first lines. Five minutes later I was reading it as eagerly as a clue to a hidden treasure. I learned that everyone's memory is capable of fantastic feats; that an ordinary person if he has taught himself to control the way in which his brain stores impressions can memorise accurately long and complicated lists of facts after reading them over only once or twice. I thought I would test the truth of the statement.

I took a timetable out of my suitcase and began reading quietly in the manner prescribed, the names of about one hundred railway stations. I observed that, after reading them over a few times, I could recite the whole list off with hardly a mistake. With a little more practice I found I had committed them so completely to memory that I could remember them in the reverse order and even pick out one station from the list and say which number it was, and what were the names of the towns before and after it.

I was astonished at the memory I had acquired and spent the rest of my journey on more and more difficult experiments in memory, and reflecting how this new control I was achieving over my mind would materially help me to a greater success in life. After this, I worked hard at this wonderful memory system, and within a week I found I could recall passages from books and quote them with ease; names, addresses, and business appointments were remembered immediately; and in four months I had succeeded in learning Spanish.

If I have obtained from life a measure of wealth and happiness, it is to that book I owe it, for it revealed to me the workings of my brain.

Some years ago, I had the good fortune to meet its author, M. L. Borg, and I promised him to propagate his method, and to-day I am glad of this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to him.

I can only suppose that others wish to acquire what is, after all, the most valuable asset towards success in life.

Borg's address is: M. L. Borg, c/o Aubanel Publishers, 14 Highfield Road, Dublin, 6, Ireland. Apply to him for his little book, "The Eternal Laws of Success." It is free to all who wish to develop their memory.

F. ROBERTS.

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

A Rumanian Notebook

I ARRIVED in Bucharest by air. The big change came at Vienna airport, where I stepped out of the crowded Austrian Airlines Viscount, with its bright hostesses and small seats, and into the Ilyushin 18 of the Rumanian Tarom Airline, which had very few passengers, dim lights, a sober *décor*, but seats as wide and comfortable as those of an Edwardian Pullman. Bucharest airport proved not to be like all the others. It resembled rather a railway station hall of the *belle époque*, particularly the Gare d'Orsay in Paris, with its tall columns of cream and brownish marble, its lofty arches, and deserted silent corridors. I had fancied Russia might be like this, but not Rumania. Then a young man emerged from the shadows to greet me. He was unmistakable Rumanian, his face the spit-and-image of portraits of Prince Alexander Cuza, the *hospodar* who had brought about the union of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia in 1857, and who was to that extent the founder of the modern nation. The young man spoke to me in English; he told me he had been sent from the Institute for Cultural Relations to help me through the formalities. In the event there were no formalities. I had been given my visa in London, and that was evidently enough.

The Rumanians, I was to discover, are an oriental people. They can be very suspicious of foreigners, but they are naturally and lavishly hospitable. I had the idea originally of wandering about unnoticed and anonymous, talking to people, ringing up those whose numbers I had been given. But there were too many invitations—luncheons, dinners, theatres, the opera, the circus, museums, concerts, visits, and trips into the country. One thing I was firm about: I would not be shown around. I was not really conscious of being restricted, only of being a sort of natural curiosity. Most of the people I met were unaccustomed to meeting people like me. Western Communists and fellow-travellers, they were all too used to; as one official unkindly said, *"nous en avons soupé."* The novelty for them was to meet an intellectual who was really from the other side. Rumanian intellectuals are rarely allowed to travel to the West. I met a Professor of English who had never been to England, and a Professor of Italian who had never been to Italy. They envy the Hungarians, 35,000 of whom were allowed to visit Western countries in the first six months of 1960, compared to a mere few hundred from Rumania. There are no regular Western Press correspondents in Bucharest. Even the foreign diplomatic missions cannot invite Rumanian nationals to their social functions except through the medium of the Protocol Department. So I could hardly expect to remain the invisible observer.

IT WAS NOT ALWAYS EASY in the festive atmosphere they created round me to speak to people alone; but I kept the afternoons sacred, and then I used to wander in the public gardens *tête à tête* with one person or another who gave me the impression then of speaking without constraint if not without anxiety. There is now a kind of "thaw": the régime is so satisfied with its economic achievements that it wants them to be seen. It is in a mood to relax. It is eager to have tourists and cultural exchanges with the West, and, of course, more international trade. It has even released many of its political prisoners, first in ones and twos, and then by a major amnesty decree dated December 30, 1962.

THE ROAD from Bucharest airport to the centre of the city was short, and, as I discovered in daylight, very pleasing. The forest beside the airfield leads into a public park, and the park into a *chaussée*, and this in turn into the central boulevard of the city. The young man who looked like Alexander Cuza helped me to change some money and to send a telegram from a large post office building, which might have been Italian. Indeed there was much about Bucharest which made me think of a slightly frenchified Italian city: Turin, perhaps, in the early hours of the morning—for in Bucharest there is very little traffic, and the air is strangely quiet. But there are bright lights in the bars and restaurants and stores, and some coloured advertising signs of what was spoken of as "socialist trade." It is not a dull place.

I could not buy a street map of Bucharest, nor any guide-book, and to find my bearings I studied the lay-out of the city from the top of the Ambassador Hotel. There is no notable old architecture (and apparently never has been), and the most interesting buildings are the newest. Apart from one or two buildings put up by Russian architects—such as the hideous Soviet embassy—the styles are quite pleasing: new blocks do not reach out high above the skyline as they do in London and Milan, and the city is well laid out. There are more trees and squares and flower-beds than I have seen in any other metropolis. One morning I emerged very early from my hotel to find a party of robust municipal gardeners planting chrysanthemums in the soil at the base of every single tree in the central boulevards. Nowhere in all the public parks and gardens did I see one scrap of litter.

THE RUMANIANS share with the Italians the desire to make an impression, to *fa' figura*. Appearances matter much to them. Marble in the

MAURICE CRANSTON, *author and political philosopher, teaches at the University of London. He has written a biography of John Locke and a small volume called* Freedom. *His most recent contribution to* ENCOUNTER *was his essay on Jean-Paul Sartre in the April 1962 number.*

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hotel hall is more important than hot water in the bathroom, or stoppers in the sink. Even in the best hotels in Bucharest the service is erratic. You ring a bell and nothing happens. You telephone for breakfast: a waiter says *"Immediat!"* but never comes. Letters may not reach you. But the food is good—again about the standard of Turin or Milan, and in a few expensive restaurants better. The waiters and maids seem pleased to serve one: not always looking for tips, as in Italy or France, or determined to assert aggressively, as in Germany and Sweden, that they are as good as you are. This may be the result of a political system which constantly flatters the proletariat. And not only flatters them. The wage-earners have some material advantages, including a better chance than the salaried class of getting their children into universities. There are 83,000 students (and 10,000 university teachers) in Rumania out of a population of eighteen million—a notably higher proportion than in England—and the admission boards are obliged to give priority to the children of workers. The Rumanian Communists, like Plato, are eager to elevate the clever ones among the lower ranks and humble families.

It goes without saying that university teachers are better paid than they are in England: the money is much the same, but the fringe benefits are substantial. Flats are provided for dons in Bucharest at rents between £12 and £36 a year. The meals in the senior common rooms are subsidised and cheap. But personally I could not do the work. Unless one is a scientist, one is forced to give all one's teaching a Marxist, or Party, angle. In the department of philosophy at Bucharest University, for example, there are three Lecturers in Dialectical Materialism out of a staff of six. And everyone is observed.

I ASKED ONE PROFESSOR, a historian, if he did not feel oppressed by the lack of liberty. He answered: "Freedom has very rarely been a choice for us. We have learned how to live with oppressors. There is a Rumanian proverb which says 'The head that is bowed is not cut off'. . . ." I suggested that the Poles seemed nowadays to have won themselves a fair measure of freedom. "But the Poles are different from us," he said. "They react to oppression with audacity. The Rumanian reaction is silence and cunning. You know the phrase of James Joyce."

"What about 'exile'?"

"I had left that word unspoken."

The Rumanian government is plainly worried by the tendency of some of its ablest men to opt for exile. The main reason why intellectuals—even leading Academicians—are so seldom allowed to leave the country is fear that they will defect. Within recent years, such men as Petru Dumitriu, a highly successful novelist, and the pet of the régime, have fled to the West; so has Gelu Barbu, the leading ballet dancer of the Bucharest opera, Mindru Katz, the pianist, and Iancu Korocy, the composer. A number of scientists have also left Rumania, a large proportion of them Jews.

It was a Jewish loyalist who spoke to me most bitterly about this question. The wartime government of Antonescu, "fascist" as it may have been, did not send the Rumanian Jews to Germany for extermination in the wholesale way that Hitler's other allies did, and hundreds of thousands of Jews remained in Rumania after the war. Naturally they provided a large element of the intelligentsia. The Jewish scientists are of great importance to the régime for building up the country, and the government does not like losing them. It is troubled by the lure of Israel. Any Rumanian Jew who goes near the Israeli legation in Bucharest is almost certain to be penalised. An English visitor—a notable "progressive"—was waylaid by detectives when he tried to call on the Israeli Minister recently. Would-be emigrants have sometimes to pay large sums in dollars for their liberty. And perhaps every Jew who goes makes it harder for those who stay.

ONE OF THE few Rumanian writers I had met before I went to Bucharest was Mihai Beniuc, a poet of the Auden or Day Lewis generation, who wrote the kind of poetry they wrote when young. Beniuc is now chairman of the Rumanian Writers' Union. He is a likeable man, small, bright-eyed, and extremely well-dressed. His manner is unassuming, his conversation relaxed and easy. He travels a lot and knows many Western writers personally. That he belonged to the *élite* I knew already; but it was only after I had read a report he gave me, of the Rumanian Writers' Congress of 1962, that I realised what a Very Important Man he was. For this remarkable document shows that Rumanian writers are literally members of a School, and Mihai Beniuc is their stern and exigent Headmaster. The text he gave me was in English, and I shall summarise it.[1]

Having declared that "the Leninist principle of Party guidance in literature" was "the cornerstone of our creative activity," Beniuc gave voice to these solemn words:

> Our writers—guided by the Party—have determinedly rejected certain stray attempts to divert our literature from the course of its revolutionary development. A well-deserved retort was given to Alexandru Jar—a provocateur and a failure—who tried to slander the principles of Party guidance in literature by dangling the discarded idea of liberalism; the attempts at giving a negative distorted picture of the truths of the new life were rejected.

Beniuc turned next to the various departments of current Rumanian literature, and awarded good marks and bad to the several practitioners by name. He congratulated the novelists on their increased topicality, but criticised them for having stressed the past sufferings of the workers instead of their revolutionary activities: "the spiritual universe of the Communists is not satisfactorily explored." Beniuc complained that Eugen Barbu's novel, *The North Road*, deprived the Party of part of its

[1] See also *Rumanian Review* (Bucharest), Vol. XVI, No. 2, pp. 105–132.

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grandeur. As for C. Chirita's novel *Steel*, Beniuc said sharply "our publishing houses should be more exacting."

What is altogether more surprising is that Beniuc attacked a novel by one of the leading writers of the country, an Academician, a prominent Communist, a possible alternative chairman of the Writers' Union, namely *The Roots Are Bitter* by Zaharia Stancu. Beniuc conceded that there were excellent pages in Stancu's "ample work," but protested that other parts were just "an agglomeration of insignificant facts, heroes, and episodes."

As for poetry, Beniuc reported, with satisfaction, that "a lyric poetry of socialist patriotism" had come into being. At the same time he took exception to the "hermitism" and "obscurity" of certain poets. He said that obscurity was the "capital sin" of such "gifted young poets" as Nichita Stanescu, Cezar Baltag, and Aurera Cornu; and, he added, "experienced poets like Cicerone Theodorescu or Aurel Rau do not set them a good example when they too resort to such devices." Beniuc also complained that such a "talented poet" as A. E. Baconsky had "brought an alien jarring note into our literature." He singled out for criticism the poets published in the Transylvanian literary magazine *Steaua*, whom he accused of "escapism."

MOST OF THE WRITERS named by Beniuc were present at the Congress, but none of them appears from the report to have attempted to rebut the charges he levelled against them. The dominant note seems to have been *mea culpa*. According to the text: "The literary critics who participated in the debate . . . agreed with all the critical remarks formulated by their colleagues, and . . . declared for a combative and objective, receptive and exacting literary critique." Others who spoke merely underlined the Headmaster's words. Aurel Rau, one of the editors of *Steaua*, confessed that the magazine had been wrong in the past, but promised that henceforth it would follow the line of the Party and publish only "citizen's poetry." Even the powerful (or once-powerful?) Academician Zaharia Stancu refrained from self-defence; "we writers," he said, "must become ourselves people of a new type."

The national President Gheorghiu-Dej appeared in person at the congress, which is not altogether surprising, since the Writers' Union had sent him a telegram on his sixtieth birthday some months before, saying that his advice would help them "to evolve the most appropriate methods for representing in books" the achievements of the people. They added: "Allow us, in place of words of praise, to promise solemnly that we, as writers and citizens, shall dip our pen in the living water of our times and make the Party's word shine at its tip like a diamond."

A less predictable participant was the most eminent of living Rumanian writers, the poet Tudor Arghezi, now aged 82. For ten years after the Communist *coup*, Arghezi kept silent. Although he stayed in Rumania, he published nothing. His disapproval was unspoken, but manifest. His attitude was conspicuously different from that of the only other internationally famous Rumanian writer of his generation, the Moldavian novelist Mihail Sadoveanu. Sadoveanu supported the régime; he paid homage to Stalin; he re-wrote his work to bring it into keeping with the Party line. Under the Rumanian kings he had been just as devoted a monarchist, not only a Senator, but President of the Senate. Sadoveanu died in October, 1961, at the age of 81, covered with as many Communist decorations as he had once been covered with Royal decorations, and quite untouched by the upheavals in Party leadership.

Tudor Arghezi, on the other hand, has but recently emerged from retirement. He accepted the honorary post of President of the Writers' Union only after Sadoveanu's death. Moreover, in his address to the Writers' Congress, Arghezi did not say anything about making the Party's word shine at the tip of his pen like a diamond, or even about dipping that pen in the living water of our times. Instead he urged his fellow-writers to remember that the purpose of culture was to develop "the sense of moderation and balance." There are two theories about Arghezi's new attitude: one is that he was "converted to socialism"—a word used by Beniuc himself in his preface to Arghezi's *Collected Poems*. The other is that Arghezi was alienated from the "factionalist," "Stalinist," "anti-Party" régime of Anna Pauker and has changed his policy because the leadership has changed. It is not easy to fit either theory with the dates. But it is an undoubted triumph for Beniuc to have acquired for the Writers' Union so illustrious a figurehead.

WHAT IT FEELS like to be a writer under such a system, I thought it best to find out from humbler persons than either Arghezi or Beniuc. I had a chance to talk to several. I went to their clubs in Bucharest, and to two former royal palaces in the country—at Mogosoaia and Sinaia—which are now used by the Writers' Union as *maisons de création* for authors. The material conditions are excellent. Mogosoaia is one of the most beautiful buildings in Rumania; it was built by the reigning Prince Constantine Brincoveanu in 1702, badly damaged in several wars, but perfectly restored in living memory by Princess Marthe Bibesco, who, according to a priest I met in the chapel, is still "the owner." The state, however, has transformed the main building into a museum (an extremely good one), and the smaller building is the *maison de création* where authors, having presumably first dipped their pen in the living water of the times, can go to stay for several weeks and write in peace. Mogosoaia is the best example, with the convent of Hurez, of what is called the Brincoveanu style of building in Rumania; like the architecture of Venice, it is a marvellously successful union of oriental and western elements; Mogosoaia might almost be a group of Venetian *palazzi* transported to an English park.

The palaces at Sinaia are of another order, and built in different tastes—all extremely bad. The main palace, or Pelesh, built by the Hohenzollern King Carol I, between 1873 and 1883, is such a monstrous example of the *gout allemand* that the Rumanian republicans do well to preserve it intact as a warning, as a sermon if not in stone, in plaster

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and tiles and *Holzbau*, on the evils of monarchical government. The central structure is a copy of the chamber of commerce at Lübeck, with a Turkish wing and a Florentine wing at either side. The authors do not use this building; but the smaller and slightly less ugly and altogether more comfortable Pelishor palace, built by Carol I for his great nephew, Carol II, and the Foisorul, a Spanish-style villa, where Carol II kept Madame Lupescu.

In these palaces, Rumanian authors live literally like princes. Everything is lovingly, scrupulously tended, the gardens and the interiors alike. The authors even have gendarmes in the grounds to protect them. The idea of Bolshevik vandals destroying the possessions of the *ancien régime* is absurdly misplaced; in Rumania, at any rate, the Communists cherish and enjoy them. In the Pelishor palace the authors still use King Carol's glass and porcelain, with the royal coat of arms engraved, and his linen, with the crown and monogram embroidered. The furnishings are correspondingly luxurious. I must confess that as I lay back in King Carol's huge German Edwardian bath, with hot air streaming down from ingeniously located pipes, I felt unable to imagine anyone writing good socialist-realist copy in such an atmosphere.

I ASKED ONE YOUNG WRITER how he did it.

"It's work," he explained. "One learns to do it. In England you have to please an editor or a publisher. Here you have to please the committee."

"But there is only one committee," I said. "In England there are many editors and publishers."

"Of course you are freer in a sense. But here we are less commercial. No writer of any talent is allowed to go in want here; and if you are a poet you can get away with a lot. You put in a word or two about the evil social past and the brilliant social future, and you are home. The painters do the same. They paint a new factory scene and some muscular toiling figures, and then they do what they want to do."

"But Beniuc didn't offer much freedom to writers in his report of the congress. What about the case of the *Steaua*?"

"Of course there is criticism. Criticism is part of the whole Communist system. But the fact that the *Steaua* and such magazines have done what they have done shows that Rumanian poetry is not the social-realist hack-stuff you people in the West imagine. And you can see for yourself that it hasn't changed since the congress. If anything it's getting bolder every day."

"But surely the poets themselves promised to change?"

"Promising is one thing; doing is another. You must not be too naïve. Look at Beniuc himself. He complains about alien influences and obscurity, and promptly he goes forth and publishes translations of Apollinaire."

"But what about his attacks on the liberalism of Alexandru Jar?"

"If Beniuc had really wanted to attack a liberal, he would not have attacked Alexandru Jar. Jar is a very obscure writer with no following whatever. A great many writers more influential than he have advocated the autonomy of the artist. It's significant that Beniuc did not even mention them. Besides Beniuc wasn't really talking to writers; he was talking for the record. In a country like this, that is the accepted method. You say one thing and mean another. And everybody knows you mean something different from what you say. You have a public voice and a private voice. And the more you dissent, the louder you proclaim your obedience. It is a kind of bluff or play-acting, and now people are not deceived, although, of course, they have to pretend to be deceived."

"It must be like living in the world of *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*."

"Perhaps it is. But you will never understand what it feels like to be a Rumanian unless you remember that we are entirely surrounded by People's Democracies. The only alternative to the Communism we have is a Communism much worse. Personally I think it's wisest to join the Party; they are quite keen for intellectuals to join now, and you are better off in than out."

I PUT THE SAME QUESTIONS to an older writer I met at Sinaia.

"Don't ask me anything," he said. "I'm much too old and out of touch. Oh, I can see you are wondering why I don't go abroad. I often dream of Paris, where you can say what you think and write what you like—so long as you have something to live on. But what could I live on? I can only write in Rumanian."

"Well, Petru Dumitriu has started writing in French since he emigrated."

"Dumitriu is an Armenian; they can write in any language. Still, I can't understand Dimitriu going away with his wife and leaving their baby daughter behind."

"Perhaps she'll be allowed to join them."

"You fancy that? I hope you're right. But I'm too old to change; and I'm too attached to people here. Besides they treat me well. I have a place in the country and a flat in Bucharest. I'm not an Academician, but I have almost the same advantages. I'm allowed to buy foreign clothes and other imported things at the special luxury shops; I can dine in the best restaurants; and at home I have the best provisions and wines. I think that's a good system. The artist is nature's aristocrat. Except that I don't consider myself an artist any more. I've taken to folk-lore and translations. That's what the people read anyway."

THE PREVALENCE OF TRANSLATIONS I had already noticed. In Bucharest I visited the huge printing works of the Scinteia publishing complex, and I noticed that practically every machine was turning out translation of Dickens, Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Ronsard and Stendhal. The Rumanian books I saw were children's books. It was the same in the bookshops: translations seemed in all of them to outnumber new Rumanian books. I was told that in the past ten years the public had bought 350,000 copies of Shakespeare, 320,000 copies of Balzac, and 160,000 copies of Goethe—all in Rumanian translations. I asked Beniuc about the circulation of new Rumanian literature. In the case of a young poet,

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he said, they would print a thousand copies for a start, and hope to sell more.

"Socialism doesn't eliminate the criterion of success," Beniuc said. Then modestly lowering his eyes, he added: "Though sometimes I think some of us are *too* successful."

But somehow I did not feel I could envy Beniuc his success or his power. Both are too dependent on the pleasure of the political authorities. Another change in the Party leadership, and who knows what happens next? I could see the wisdom of the man who had taken to folk-lore and translations. The most satisfying life in Rumania must be that of those whose work is neither too creative nor too controversial: musicians, perhaps, actors or archæologists, or museum curators or scientists. Music is very well arranged. There are now seventeen symphony orchestras in Rumania where there was only one before the war. There are concert halls in every important town; and as there is plenty of money and time for rehearsals, standards are remarkably high. The radio is even more Reith-like than Reith's B.B.C.

THE THEATRE is another institution where everyone seemed cheerful. Rumania has always been proud of its theatre, even though there were only eighteen theatres and opera houses in the country before the war, whereas to-day there are fifty-eight. And the socialist system has certain advantages compared with the bourgeois theatres of the West. Actors in Rumania have economic security, and managers are not obliged to put on *Kitsch* to make ends meet. The theatres are always full, partly because the seats are cheap, partly because many free tickets are distributed through the Unions. The audiences I saw were not very fashionably dressed, but they were better behaved, and not less intelligent than those of the West. The actual style of the acting surprised me. I had expected something in the French tradition—since so much of Rumanian culture is still Francophile—but in fact the acting is closer to the naturalistic or Anglo-Saxon method. Most of the plays to be seen when I was in Bucharest were classics of foreign plays—*Macbeth*, *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, Shaw's *St. Joan*, Anouilh's *Alouette*, *Uncle Vanya*, Tennessee Williams's *Orpheus Descending*, and two plays by J. B. Priestley—*Mr. Kettle and Mrs. Moon* and *An Inspector Calls*.

I was disappointed to see nothing by Rumanian dramatists like Caragiale or Victor Eftimiu; or any of those who had been criticised by Beniuc at the congress. The Tennessee Williams play (bad as I think it, like most of his work) was an obvious choice, for it combines an equivocal sexual interest with strong but undefined intimations of political oppression; it depicts the America of lynchings and police terrorism which is described in the Communist Press. Moreover, the production in Budapest (by Moni Gelehrter) and the acting were both extremely good.

I asked an official of the Theatre Institute, a handsome, florid man who looked as if he had once been an actor, why they chose those particular Priestley plays.

"But he's a progressive, isn't he?"

"He may be. But he has written much better plays."

"We chose the ones they do in the Soviet Union."

I said I thought that a very odd test. Besides, if they wanted social-realist drama, England at the moment was very rich in such material. I told him about the Royal Court Theatre, and the work of our young "committed" dramatists. But he showed no enthusiasm.

"You see, what we are looking for," the official explained, "is not what is 'committed' to socialism, least of all to the petit-bourgeois socialism of the West. We are looking for really good plays that have some social message in them—implicit preferably rather than explicit, as is the case with all great drama."

And as he spoke these words, I could see in his eloquent actor's face a look of fastidious resistance to what I was urging on him.

ONE OF THE PLACES I liked most in Bucharest was the Village Museum. I went first without enthusiasm, for nobody had told me what to expect. The trouble with one's refugee friends is that they make out that everything is terrible. Olivia Manning's brilliant novel about Bucharest in 1940 is called *The Spoilt City*, and such is how the exiles tend to speak of it. But Humpty Dumpty has put a lot of it together again. The Village Museum is only one of several things that are obviously better than they ever were before. The King's Palace, for example, has been turned into an excellent National Gallery of Fine Art, with paintings from the leading European schools. But the Village Museum is unique: it is actually a village of a kind, built on the edge of the central park; it is made up of a series of peasants' houses, each transplanted from different regions of the country, and set in gardens around a central wooden church. These houses are built in a striking variety of styles, for Rumania contains very different kinds of country. The Carpathian mountains lie across the land in the shape of a boomerang, inside the arc is the high-lying land of Transylvania; to the south is Wallachia, in the low Danubian plain; to the east, the steppes of Moldavia. Different parts of Rumania have been at different times under Turkish, Austrian, Hungarian, Russian, Greek, and German rule, and all these intruders have left their imprint on the people's way of building and living. Some of the houses in the Village Museum could be Alpine chalets from Austria, others, dug in the ground and covered with heavy thatch against the wind, could have come from remotest Asia. Yet all the interiors are remarkably alike. Each has one room which is much better than the others, and this is always the guest room; and all have tiny kitchens, with little stools and low tables *à la turc*; they are houses in which the Rumanians, for all their Latin blood, have lived the lives of an oriental people.

The Village Museum filled me with impatience to go into the country; and as I was lucky enough to have a car—a Russian Volga limousine with a clever chauffeur—I left as soon as civility permitted. Most foreign tourists go to the Black Sea resorts, where there are lavish new hotels that might

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be in Florida; but I preferred the mountains, where I knew the only other foreigners would be a few solitary sportsmen shooting game. But before I left I visited several other museums devoted to folk arts in Bucharest; the régime encourages these institutions because such arts, being popular, are "socialistic"; and the people keep them alive because they provide, what they have always provided, a way of asserting their national identity—as much against Russians as against any other aliens. One of the most unexpected museums is the Villa Minovici. This was built by Professor Nicolae Minovici, a fashionable doctor and philanthropist, who died unmarried in 1941, bequeathing to the State his villa and the large collection of Rumanian peasant art he had put together in his lifetime. The Villa itself, like all Rumanian architecture, is a mixture of styles; but unlike the Brincoveanu buildings, the mixture is quaint rather than impressive. But it has a pretty garden, and an Italianate campanile, where tiny bells of glass tinkle softly in the wind, like an Aeolian harp. It says something for the tranquillity of Bucharest that one can still hear them.

Inside the Villa Minovici are carpets, embroideries, costumes, pottery, and musical instruments, all arranged in a highly individualistic way. Evidence of the collector's eccentricities is abundant as evidence of his taste. The bedroom is kept as he left it, and so is the little chapel, with its ikons on glass and wood. The dining-room is more of a museum piece, and indeed was never used. For having once furnished and equipped it, the Professor afterwards invariably entertained his guests downstairs, with Turkish coffee and peasant dishes, on divans and tiny stools. Minovici was opposed to the extravagance of *mondain* life. He led the Rumanian movement against alcoholism, and the league against prostitution, as well as founding the Ambulance Service and an orphanage. On the wall of his villa there are photographs of little urchin boys, before and after he had rescued them from the streets. There is also a photograph of the Professor himself, hanging by the neck from a rope. I asked the obvious question, but was assured that it was not a tragedy, but an experiment: the Professor used to hang himself from time to time in the presence of doctors to test the effects of asphyxia. There cannot have been many public-spirited men of his time in old Rumania. As I left I spotted a notice on the door: *"Sfatul Popular al Raionului J. V. Stalin."* It was the only time I saw that name unerased.

The Rumanian folk arts and crafts include nothing much in the way of woodwork or cabinet-making. What is memorable is what is coloured. One reason for this is that the dyes are vegetable, not chemical. But the chief reason is the innate feeling for colour that the Rumanian country people had, and still have. One can see it in all their traditional handwork; carpets, ceramics, costumes, and religious paintings. And the designs have not changed much in centuries. Some of the peasant costumes still include the same items of Dacian dress that are carved at the base of Trajan's column in the Forum, on that frieze of bas reliefs which depicts in uncommonly realistic style the campaign of 100–106 A.D. when Trajan subdued Dacia, and so brought about, by the union of Romans, Italians, and Dacians, the formation of the Rumanian race, language, and culture.

Driving through the Rumanian countryside I found was an unmixed pleasure. The landscape is very beautiful, and entirely unspoiled. The roads are either Roman and straight, or romantic and devious and narrow. There is little traffic, and one moves fast. At the cross-roads of the central highways, there are control posts of the gendarmerie. Drivers of the *corps diplomatique* have to notify their itinerary in advance and stick to it; foreign motorists must inform the Tourist Office; ordinary Rumanians in lorries or motor-bicycles are often stopped to have their papers checked; but my car, coming from an official pool, was never held up. On the main roads there are a fair number of Rumanian-built lorries, but in the mountains one can drive for miles without seeing another vehicle. The Swiss Alps, one imagines, must have been like this when the poets of Byron's generation went there; and the Dolomites must have still been much the same in D. H. Lawrence's time. There are none of those advertising hoardings which nowadays disfigure the Italian highways; only near the villages there are little red signs saying *"Long live the Rumanian People's Republic"* or *"Long live Rumanian-Soviet Friendship."* These notice-boards are none too freshly painted. The much-advertised mechanisation of farms has not driven out the old country life. Many Rumanian peasants still work with their hands, and I saw hundreds of handsome horses, even some gypsies. In Bucharest they talked of re-settling the gypsies, but I was pleased to see at least one camp, a circle of straw-covered carts, around a fire. The collectivisation of Rumanian agriculture was completed this year, and it means that no one may employ the labour of anyone else on the land. But families can work their own smallholdings; and it seems they do so more industriously than they work on the collectives. Indeed, the total collectivisation of agriculture, enforced in some cases by the gendarmerie and the magistrates, has so far tended rather to diminish than increase production.

Nature, perhaps, has more to offer the visiting foreign sightseer in Rumania than art or architecture. But some of the churches and old monastries are very beautiful. At Curtea di Argesh the chapel is enchanting and the frescoes are almost Florentine in their delicacy. (The much-admired Episcopal basilica in the same town seemed to me repulsive.) In the North there are churches with marvellous frescoes which cover the outside as well as the inside walls. Rumania is full of surprises: some towns are German or Hungarian in every detail. The art of mural decoration has been kept alive, with one unfortunate result that ancient work is sometimes obscured by modern. The Orthodox theology encourages a rather unsophisticated pictorial presentation of divine retribution and reward.

While I was staying with the authors at Sinaia, I wandered one morning down to the town, once a fashionable spa, now a holiday resort for trade

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unionists. The Edwardian casino has been converted into a House of Culture; and as I observed those working-class worthies playing backgammon, or reading, or listening to music, I felt the rather shameful patronising admiration that royal personages must once have felt as they watched the rich bourgeois gamers enjoying themselves at the tables. The atmosphere was of a North-country Labour Church or a W.E.A. summer school; there was certainly no sign of what is spoken of in the Pilkington Report as "triviality." I had even to go some distance from the casino to find a simple glass of wine.

Wine generally, I thought, was unnecessarily dear in Rumania, and in a book of official statistics I noticed that the annual output of grapes had fallen from a pre-war average of 588 thousand tons to some 344 thousand tons in 1961. I went to a vineyard to investigate this problem. It was a highly sophisticated vineyard, with elaborate machinery from the Pressoirs Colin of Bordeaux, and huge laboratories, and viticultural scientists injecting the soil with chemicals. The manager told me the reduction of the output was intentional—and indeed I had read in an old *Rumanian Handbook* of 1931 that the amount of wine produced was even then considered "too great"—and that the policy was to improve the quality. But I noticed that the old unmodernised vineyards supplied the wines that I had been drinking in the expensive restaurants and the resorts of the *élite*; and these better wines of Rumania I thought distinctly good.

ONCE, ON THE SAME DAY, I witnessed two remarkable scenes: in the morning an Orthodox baptism —the infant catechumen being totally immersed in the font; and in the afternoon, a Communist funeral. In the latter case, the corpse, that of a young woman, raven-haired and waxen-faced in death, was exposed on an open bier, and conveyed to the crematorium on a flower-bedecked lorry, under a canopy of white satin ribbons, like a bride, followed by a procession of trade unionists with banners. One of the congregation at the baptism wore a Party badge; and one of the mourners at the funeral carried a holy image.

At one church I spoke to the priest, a handsome, wily-looking man in an oily soutane. I asked about religious persecution.

"*We* are not persecuted. We of the Orthodox cult are a patriotic church, like the Church of England."

"But you are scarcely established?"

"We are the national church. We hold our services and rites. We even have a publishing house."

"But the Communists can hardly encourage a gospel which is so much at variance with theirs."

"We preach the gospel of peace. They like that. We also preach the immortality of the soul. They do not like that. But secretly they hope we are right."

"But I have been told of priests in prison. There is Alexandru Rusu, the Bishop of Maramures, and Ludovico Vida, the vicar-general of Baia Mare; and Clemento Gatti, the priest in charge of the Italian Church of Bucharest."

"An Italian? A Catholic?" The priest threw up his arms in despair. "Catholics are different. They dabble in politics. Look at Portugal and Spain and Ireland. You can't expect the Communists to tolerate them."

And, smiling with satisfaction, he rubbed his dirty hand on his soutane before he shook my hand goodbye.

Political prisoners, I noticed, did not make a popular topic of conversation. Yet the Doftana prison, where President Gheorghiu-Dej was incarcerated as a Communist by the old régime, has been turned into a public museum, and a favourite subject of social-realist painting, with Ciucurenco and others, is "Gheorghiu-Dej resisting the prison guards." Unfortunately, the other Rumanian prisons have not been transformed in this admirable way. At Dej itself, the very town from which the President takes his name, the jail was modified in 1960 to accommodate political prisoners.

A man who had been in prison for several years told me that the worst part of it for him was having no news of his wife and family. He added: "But things are not so bad as they were in the days of the Danube-Black Sea canal, where political prisoners died by the score on forced labour. In fact, as you see, the Ministry is beginning to let people out of prison, and the latest amnesty decree even provides that those who are released shall be given back their jobs and their flats. But unfortunately it does not apply to the political prisoners with the very heavy sentences, but it might be made to, especially in cases where foreigners take the trouble to intervene. . . ."

I did not meet many Party dignitaries, but I suggested to those I did that the way to make that "good impression" all Rumanians want to make on others, was to liberate the rest of their political prisoners; then all the things that were worthy of admiration in their country could be admired as they deserved to be.

Maurice Cranston

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LETTERS

Age of Man

I'M AFRAID the only comment I have on the very excellent piece by Eric Rhode ["Hitchcock's Art," ENCOUNTER, October] is "how old *is* a man?"*

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Hitchcock Productions,
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California

Hebrew Myth, Greek Tongue

BESIDE their intrinsic merit, the fascinating articles "Some Hebrew Myths and Legends" by Robert Graves and Raphael Patai [ENCOUNTER, February and March] possess a special value as cogent evidence of Hebrew-Hellenic interpenetration, a phenomenon attested to by a third scholar, Professor Cyrus Gordon. It may interest your readers to learn that my research has driven me to the firm conclusion that the ancient Hebrews spoke Greek and were of Hellenic stock. Indeed, I maintain that most of the Biblical Hebrew-Aramaic vocabulary is demonstrably Greek, notwithstanding the fact that the language of the Bible and ancient Greek developed more or less independently of each other during the two eventful milleniums which preceded the advent of Alexander. Here is my theory in brief:-

1. By applying to Hebrew the rules governing the Greek dialectal interchange of letters and other modifications, I have so far been able to ascertain that over three-quarters of the Old Testament is pure Greek, both morphologically and semantically.

2. Many proper nouns in the Bible, geographical as well as divine and personal, are Greek.

3. The compound verbs in Hebrew are made up of the radicle, plus one of several Greek prepositions.

4. As in Hebrew, the Greek deponent verb is made up of the verb in the active voice, plus the personal pronoun in the dative. Strangely enough, both Arabic and Hebrew have preserved an obsolete structure of Greek deponent and passive verbs.

5. Similarly to the Hebrew construction, the Greek aorist is made up of a modified form of future tense, plus the augment.

6. Certain Greek suffixes occur as prefixes in Arabic and Hebrew.

7. A finer understanding of many Greek words is obtained through knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew.

8. The Hebrews were Habroi or Epeirotai, the names given to Asiatic Greeks and corresponding to the Khabiru or Hepiru of Syrian and Egyptian annals.

This is not as novel as it sounds, for at one time the Spartans claimed common descent with the Jews: witness *Jewish Antiquities* (XII, iv, 10) and *I Maccabees* XII, 20–21).

JOSEPH YAHUDA

London

JOSEPH YAHUDA's "ancient Hebrews" is too loose a term to satisfy historians. Abraham's Hebrew dialect will have been influenced by Hittite not Greek—the prophet Jeremiah admitted that Israel was a mixture of Hittite and Aramaean strains. Yet it seems clear that certain Mycenaean Greek colonies were absorbed by Joshua's later Israelite confederacy, and may well have influenced the Hebrew spoken in the time of the Judges. As I pointed out a couple of years ago to the Mayor of Tel Aviv who had showed me the City badge of six stars: Tel Aviv is entitled to a great many more stars than six, because it now includes the city of Jaffa (Greek: *Iope*; Hebrew: *Japho*) where Andromeda, daughter of Cepheus and Cassiopeia, was rescued from the Draco by Perseus, founder of Mycenae. Although "Iope" is said to be Phœnician for "hill," it may well contain the name of the Greek Moon-goddess Io. According to Pomponius Mela, the city existed before the Flood; and must have been of great importance to spread itself so far across the Celestial sky of Greece.

The story of the Gibeonites who came to Joshua in rags, as suppliants, and were made hewers of wood and drawers of water for the nearby Jerusalem Temple—*i.e.*, were confirmed in their possession of the sacred groves and springs—seems to me conclusive evidence of Greek colonisation at Gibeon: Gibeon is Agabon in one text of the Septuagint, which I take to be a form of *astu achaifon* ("city of the Achaeans"). The Gibeonites were pleading that they did not form part of the native Canaanite stock, which Joshua was ordered by God to root out, but came from overseas. Achaifoi seems to be represented in Genesis by "Hivites." Xanthus, an early Lydian historian, says that "Ascalon" ("unweeded" in Greek) was founded by Pelops' uncle, Ascalus, before the Philistine invasion.

The Spartan claim to cousinship with the Jews was perhaps founded on their mythical descent from Abraham's wife Kethrah, a daughter of Japheth (the Greek hero *Iapetus*). In the story of Noah's curse on Canaan we read that "Japheth shall dwell among the tents of Shem": *i.e.*, God approved the fusion of Aramaean and Greek that Mr. Yahuda postulates.

ROBERT GRAVES

Deya,
Mallorca

Baldwin as Novelist

THERE IS SO MUCH that is generous and perceptive in Mr. MacInnes' account [ENCOUNTER, August] of the work of James Baldwin that one hesitates to criticise it. However, I am puzzled by his state-

* "... It is difficult to be level-headed about him.... He is an old man now. And yet... how his exuberance and inventiveness have grown...."

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ment that Baldwin is "not a novelist." This seems to me not only to misjudge Baldwin's considerable talent but also, as far as one can gather from his discussion of the novels, to be something that Mr. MacInnes does not entirely believe himself.

Clearly, Mr. MacInnes has grown hostile to the Novel, but the reasons that he gives why Baldwin should abandon the form are not convincing. To say that "the novel, to-day, is a hold-all you can throw any old literary garments into," is not to say anything new nor particularly damning. Years ago, Henry James was complaining of "the large loose baggy monsters" but, in fact, their off-spring have greatly enriched our lives in this century. Again, that the motives of novelists "are in part commercial" has been true of them since at least the time of Defoe.

At the moment, of course, the urgency of the situation in the States has called on Baldwin to become one of the most eloquent spokesmen for the Negroes. But I am just a little distrustful of this "world wide reputation" won "by the force of three collections of magazine articles" which to Mr. MacInnes seems "a more astonishing achievement than to be a novelist of note." One wonders: just how effective a response, to the problems with which Mr. Baldwin is concerned, does this fame represent? And, in so far as it is a real victory, does not the credit of it mainly belong to the upsurge of confidence among the American Negroes as a whole? More to the point, how far is it not a deflection of Baldwin's gifts as a writer? As Mr. MacInnes is ready to acknowledge in his discussion of the novels, James Baldwin is not solely concerned with racial problems. In *Another Country,* for example, the break-up of the white marriage and the relationship of these parents and their children are as acutely observed as the characters of the Negroes.

In fact, to say that the Novel does not express Baldwin's intentions effectively seems to me to seriously underestimate the power of the Novel. It is, perhaps, timely to remember that *Lady Chatterley* is not an English version of the *Kama Sutra,* that, in his novel, Lawrence discusses the way the Novel at its best can change our lives:

> It is the way our sympathy flows and recoils that really determines our lives. And here lies the vast importance of the Novel properly handled. It can inform and lead into new places the flow of our sympathetic consciousness and it can lead our sympathy away in recoil from things gone dead.

This seems to me to come closer to indicating what Baldwin's intentions are as a novelist than do comparisons with Thomas Hardy. For Lawrence and Baldwin seem to me to have something in common both in their vices and virtues. Where the pressure of the problems they face forces these two writers to write autobiographically, then the tone of their preaching can become strident, the manipulation of their characters implausible. But when they handle the novel properly, then they have, indeed, something prophetic to say to our civilisation.

Let us at least recognise that if Baldwin's novels, like Lawrence's, are sometimes flawed, this is the price to be paid for trying to shake off the dead hand of those insane ideas of race and sex which are still so potent to-day.

PETER CARACCIOLO

London

"Suicide of a Nation?"

LIKE S.E. [ENCOUNTER, October], I too have been in my time a British economist working in Paris, and I can therefore appreciate his feelings. But I can assure him that the aspects of the French character which he dislikes were present long before the present era of rapid growth, and whether or not the French are as "nice people" as the British (I don't think they are) is not therefore very germane to the argument. Also, of course, it did not require the suppression of parliamentary democracy to put France into economic orbit; growth rates were faster in the Fourth Republic.

Behind S.E.'s argument there seems to lie the assumption that one cannot import ideas from abroad without accepting whole cultures. We can't have Swedish labour relations without at the same time importing Swedish divorce and suicide rates. We can't use French planning methods without having the whole authoritarian apparatus of Gaullism. Much better, therefore, stay as we are! I find this to be on about the same intellectual level as the "Well, how-would-you-like-your daughter-to-marry one?" ploy.

One further point. I do *not* want to sacrifice social justice and fair play. My argument [ENCOUNTER, July] was that at present social justice tends to be interpreted as everybody being as well off compared to everybody else as he or she was before—in other words, in the most literally conservative form imaginable. I do not believe that the perpetuation of the present system of differentials and status necessarily maximises social justice; in fact I am absolutely certain it does not. The "liberal and humane assets which make Britain such a civilised country" (to quote, with approval and without irony, S.E.'s last sentence) can best be realised by greater national efficiency. If S.E. does not believe this he should, perhaps, study the trappings of British stagnation from closer, and not worry quite so much about the failings of his Parisian neighbours.

MICHAEL SHANKS

Great Missenden

I FEEL SURE most émigré Britons, like myself, would agree with Arthur Koestler that the most serious disorder in British society is the class division perpetuated by the educational system. On periodical visits to Britain, their obviousness and intensity strike me most forcibly. One point that none of the writers seems to have thought important is the stifling influence on British life of the centralisation of practically all economic and political power in the London region, and the economic inefficiency and psychological ill-effects of such a vast concentration of population. One wonders how

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prosperous Canada would be if Ottawa controlled the nation to the extent that London controls Britain.

I also noticed that in discussing the educational and class systems, all the writers equated England with Britain and omitted to mention the significant differences between England and Scotland in these respects. It is my own impression—perhaps due to national prejudice—that Scotland, while in a worse state economically than England, is psychologically somewhat healthier, perhaps because the Scottish people never took the glories of Empire very seriously.

Austen Albu refers to my own profession of engineering, and to some of its weaknesses, but I shall mention some others. The senior institutions representing the major branches of professional engineering, founded in the nineteenth century, are little better than rump bodies, since there is a proliferation of smaller institutions, many representing very narrow interests and some having low standards of admission. Such a fragmentation of the profession does not to my knowledge exist in any other Western or Commonwealth country.

Salaries of most professional engineers are much too low by any reasonable criterion, and differentials between the well and poorly qualified are too small. Graduate engineers entering many organisations (those run by senior engineers often being the worst offenders in this respect) must expect to spend years doing work that could mostly be done by non-graduates. The cult of amateurism is probably less prevalent than elsewhere, but does exist in some quarters, so that preferment often tends to be for reasons other than technical proficiency. Until recently the institutions, ostrich-like, declined to concern themselves with the general state of the profession, but this attitude may be changing now. A body that was formed a few years ago to represent the professional (as opposed to the technical) interests of engineers has not gained widespread support, and has accomplished very little. The loss of well-qualified engineers by emigration has been enormous, and in fact it could be argued that the engineering departments of many colleges ought to be paid for by the governments of Commonwealth countries.

C. R. Neill

Edmonton,
Canada

Writers, Hippopotami

Mr. John Weightman, in his review of my book *Maria Cross* [September], states: "If he has written a book about eight Catholics, it is because, despite his reservations, he believes in their greatness; they are, for him, the best modern writers, the ones he has thought it worthwhile to write about."

I don't suppose that if a zoologist wrote a book about eight hippopotami, Mr. Weightman would assert that he necessarily did so because these were "for him the best modern mammals." Yet the assertion is no more gratuitous in the second case than in the first. I did not anywhere say or imply that I regarded these writers as "the best modern writers" and I did not, and do not now, so regard them. They were, for me, interesting and important writers who had something interesting and important in common; that is why I thought them worth writing about. If in addition to that I had thought them "the best" I would of course have said so. I have no comment to make on Mr. Weightman's own opinions about my book, but I object to his presenting *as mine* an opinion which I did not express and do not hold.

Conor Cruise O'Brien

University of Ghana,
Legon, Accra

I apologise for reading into Dr. O'Brien's book an opinion he says he does not hold. My excuse is that, by implication, he exalts these writers at the expense of others; he is, for instance, explicitly unfavourable to Valéry in such a way as to suggest that Valéry is less great.

But I venture to question the judiciousness of his mammalian parallel. In making it, Dr. O'Brien has surely been led astray by local colour. The function of the zoologist, as a scientist, is to study all animals, from the amoeba to the elephant, without reference to questions of value, except as regards such material matters as their functioning in relation to environment. The literary critic is not a scientist. For the comparison to apply, one would have to think of Dr. O'Brien as a learned and intelligent hippopotamus writing a book about the spiritual qualities of eight other hippopotami.

John Weightman

London

"Negro Crisis"

Some four months ago I left a country which was visibly disturbed over the Negro question and was moving to re-establish the civil rights of 20 million second-class American citizens. I returned this month and I could not recognise my country. Something big, definable and primitive had seized America and it is as palpable as a Birmingham church bombing, or an electrified cattle-prod.

In these months away from home, I had wandered around the empty quarters of the Middle East and the overcrowded cities of the rest of Asia, its islands and archipelagoes. I had made such trips before, Africa included. This time on my return I found that I had been out of touch with America as never before. It is easy to lose touch with such an immense land mass as America because the events which make up its diary of life and politics and which create its moods are statistically infinite. A police scandal in Kansas City, a racial outbreak in a New Jersey suburb, a nationwide railroad strike threat, unemployment in Detroit, tax cuts, elections—the events are many, the news is front-page but normally one catches up in a few days and it's as if you never left home.

But not this time, and thus I was totally unprepared for the America of Autumn 1963, a far different America from the one I had last seen and felt

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last Spring. I sensed this even before I landed at Idlewild Airport. In the plane flying from one coast to another I read *Life, Look, Time, Newsweek* and the daily papers I hadn't seen in months. They seemed to me crammed with news and articles and leaders about only one subject—the Negro's fight for social, political, and economic integration into the whole of American society. I had left an America which was informed by a *national* concern about civil rights and had returned to find an America which for the first time seemed to be engaged and overwhelmed by the *personal* and *individual* concerns of an entire people, black and white.

The newspapermen I have talked to have confirmed my vague impression that there has been some kind of change among Americans about what is still called, parochially, the race question. Two executives of the New York *Herald Tribune* told me last week that since June "we've been printing 400 per cent, 500 per cent more news—maybe more, who knows—about the Negro fight than we did in the Spring."

"And what's more," said one, "we have all the space in the world for this news, as much as we want every day of the week and more on Sundays."

When did all this happen and why, how? Early this summer was the answer. It just exploded—boom! Perhaps it was Birmingham, a nocturnal murder, the sit-ins and the swim-ins, the march on Washington idea, the Rev. Martin Luther King and Roy Wilkins in jail, Hollywood stars on the march. But whatever it was, what had started out, like the early years of the Civil War as "a limited war for a limited end," as Bruce Catton described it in *Terrible Swift Sword*, has now been transformed into a campaign *à l'outrance* and the initiative is entirely in the hands of the American Negro, who may properly claim to be the American conscience to-day. And what I felt was that the country now seems confused, fumbling and somehow frightened about what has been unloosed.

The newspapers print speeches, quotations, statements from Negro leaders, sub-leaders, self-ordained spokesmen, saints and ruffians, most of which last Spring would have been edited out of a reporter's copy as too inflammatory, too provocative, too repetitive. Before me is the New York *Times* front page of August 28 with four major stories on the civil rights fight:

AVID SEGREGATIONIST WINS IN MISSISSIPPI
CAPITAL IS READY FOR MARCH TODAY; 100,000 EXPECTED
EDUCATION BOARD TO DRAFT AN INTEGRATION TIMETABLE
GOVERNOR [ROCKEFELLER] HEARD AT PICKETS' TRIAL, TESTIFIES HE ORDERED 7 DEMONSTRATORS OUSTED FROM HIS OFFICES

Last Spring, one front-page story would have been par for the course; no more. Chicago's newspapers, reported the *Herald Tribune*, "which for years buried reports of racial disturbances for fear of precipitating another 1919-style riot, have been reporting this summer's revolt in full and prominently displayed stories."

TO EXPLAIN HOW this happened so swiftly demands an intuition which I lack as do many others with whom I have talked. I cannot understand the swift onset for this long-predicted—by Negro opinion—revolution and which is here now. I cannot understand it nor account for it and nobody else can. Perhaps, it is the America of the pendulum swing from one extreme to another; the America which a few years ago half-accepted two young men named Cohn and Schine as home-grown Kremlinologists and which to-day accepts almost casually a nuclear treaty with Moscow. Perhaps the inability to explain what has happened is a breakdown in the kind of political intelligence, the unerring sense of the reason for an event and its prognosis, which is the politician's or editor's stock-in-trade. Perhaps it is because the politician, like the average citizen, has suddenly become personally accessible to the issue which is to-day the most central in our domestic life.

Customary political discourse, for example, can still deal cogently with Barry Goldwater's future or the Sino-Soviet split. One has a "position" about these things as one has about literature or the opera or religion. That's how it used to be about the Negro question—used to be, but no more. In fact there is almost an unconscious avoidance of the issue in favour of intimate revelations about Bobby Kennedy's meetings with a group of Negro intellectuals or the sexual aberration of a Negro protest leader.

Rather one waits for the "event" to happen, the new headline, the new and latest form of Negro protest. "Chicago Negroes Stretch Out In Mud," says a headline—and a sense of bewilderment befalls you. This is no longer Mississippi nor is it Bull Connor nor the Alabama governor. It's you, and what is there to think about when American Negroes are lying in the mud—voluntarily—except to get them out of the mud, clean them up, shake them by the hand and—either you do or you don't. As the song goes, "Is you is, or is you ain't . . . ?"

And it may be that the mood of confusion masks the fact that, for the first time in a century, the American people know what to do or what has to be done and they are being told it firmly, nastily, crudely, spitefully, daily—but they are being told, and you defend *apartheid* or you don't; you defend gradualism or you say *now*. As a man newly arrived from another planet, I sense that the suddenness of all this is due to the discomfort of reality, the kind of reality which makes all previous "realities" pure sham. A whole people has all at once realised that school integration does mean the Bronx as well as Baton Rouge and it does mean black boys and white girls having love-affairs and even marrying each other and having babies.

Once upon a time, say four months ago, it was easy I suppose to talk about the "progress" being made in America and to feel a warming organic liberalism because all was going well "for our side." It might be a bit of self-flagellation to read the James Baldwin piece in the *New Yorker* but then there was the Norman Podhoretz rejoinder in *Commentary* to keep it all on a Proustian, belle-lettristic level. And "the fire next time" seemed no more imminent than—next time. But nobody, I think, was prepared for a "next time" which occurs each day and each night in every place that

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is America. Nothing and nobody is sacred any more because the American Negro has found the secret—unconditional surrender, and America is not South Africa.

The daily episodes in the struggle are no longer events but merely episodes which keep flashing by like the same newsreel which rolls on and on because nobody, not even the Negro, knows how to end it and it is easier to assign star reporters to uncover new angles about the New Sociology. The dull, unceasing pain of it all will continue indefinitely until someone comes up with the obvious answer to the still invisible, unmentionable question:

How much longer must the American Negro remain a second-class citizen or—is you is or is you ain't?

ARNOLD BEICHMAN

New York City

Kleist

AS A STUDENT of German literature I feel I must object to Miss Kathleen Nott's review of Kleist's "The Marquise of O." [ENCOUNTER, April.]

Firstly for a purely technical reason: the story which Miss Nott discusses is "Michael Kohlhaas" and not as appears consistently throughout the review "Michael Kohlhaus."

Secondly: the word order of the sentence "Like me, Goethe, who was Kleist's contemporary, could not stand him," would lead us to suppose that Miss Nott considers herself superior to Goethe. Quite apart from the arrogance of the statement, it raises another point. Does Miss Nott have a theory of the Infallibility of Goethe? At times Goethe's critical opinions were strange: for instance, he considered Schubert's settings of his songs inferior to those of the now unknown Zeltner. Nor was he particularly delighted with the main writings of the German Romantic movement. Could not even the great and Olympian Goethe have been occasionally prone to a little professional jealousy? Must we treat every word that Goethe said as Holy Writ?

Thirdly: Miss Nott's rather wild statement "I find it staggering that Kant could upset *any* writer with warmth of imagination." Granted that Kleist misinterpreted Kant; but this does not mean to say that he has no warmth of imagination as Miss Nott seems to imply; if anything he suffered from an uncontrolled imagination. Miss Nott has obviously struck the name of Schiller off her list of writers with warmth of imagination, since, if she reads his works, she will find them to be completely permeated with Kantian philosophy. She could also strike the name of Goethe off her list, since he was also influenced by Kant.

Granted that Kleist's stories are a particularly German type and rather "Gothick," but if Miss Nott were to read his plays, particularly *Der Zerbrochene Krug* and *Amphitryon*, she would find not only that often-sought German humour but also an extremely modern psychology and an abundance of "warmth of imagination" and humanity.

DEREK W. REID

Belfast

I PLEAD GUILTY to a not uncommon form of hallucination which made my eye persistently read "u" instead of "a": but to nothing else. The word-order of "Like me, Goethe..." does not mean what Mr. Reid is led to suppose. *Das ist ein Witz* (as a German fellow-student said to me once at Kant's old university, shaking his fist, when I had failed to laugh at a very laborious anecdote).

Beginning with "Does Miss Nott have a theory...?", the answers in order to the questions are: No, Yes, No.

I said "*upset* by Kant," not "influenced by Kant."

I was sent the stories to review, not the plays, and I treated them as an independent work to be considered on their own merits by general literary standards.

Will Mr. Reid tell me what a reviewer, who has a strong, genuine and spontaneous dislike of a book is to do—except express it honestly, with considered reasons, as I tried. This consideration led me further to question the judgment and some of the motives of those who are now trying to give Kleist a place in literature which strikes me as exaggeratedly high.

KATHLEEN NOTT

London

Latin America

WILLIAM CLARK'S "Letter from Latin America" (ENCOUNTER, May) seems to me to be typical of the well-intentioned, ill-informed, and misconceived article that passes for reporting on this continent. As a geographical unit "Latin America" exists in the same way as "Africa" or "Asia" exist; but unfortunately the image of unity in the political and social sense still exists, uncomplicated by the sort of interest and publicity that have made writers wary of indulging in continent-wide generalisations about Africa, supported by little more than a few brief impressions.

Mr. Clark repeats the too familiar generalisations of the "Latin American opinion is..." style, and at the usual high level of generality which, though it may not be possible to refute, precisely because it is so general, nevertheless is impossible to sustain and serves little purpose in helping to understand the area. For example, he writes, "It is quite clear that Castro is not a popular hero in Latin America" and that "On the whole Castro is believed by most Latin Americans to have made a hash of Cuba's economy" and that "Cuba is not all that admired even on the left." On the first point I would suggest that it is not quite clear that Castro is not a popular hero in Latin America, though in the absence of public opinion polls I would not assert that he is. I could assert that my own personal experience of university work and life in Colombia has led me to believe that for many intellectuals and for many of the underprivileged groups Castro is a sort of popular hero, but that would take us no further than a deadlock of impressions. On the second

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point I would suggest that "most" Latin Americans have little more than a vague notion of the economic state of Cuba, which is hardly surprising given the paucity of communications, the high level of illiteracy, and the fact that virtually the only source of information on Cuba is the reports of the American press syndicates, uniformly of a low quality. On the third point I admit to great surprise. Castro is admired, though not uncritically, by the left in Colombia at least; is Mr. Clark sure of his facts for the other countries?

There are so many other misconceptions and dubious interpretations. He writes: "The expectations of Latin America" are that they will arrive at the affluent society "by what they believe to be the North American method of 'laissez faire.'" I imagine that many in Mexico and Bolivia will be surprised at this description of their economic method, let alone Costa Rica, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Even the Conservative President of Colombia is talking of the need for state intervention in certain vital areas of economy.

He also writes: "A small state like Colombia has viable plans for development that would make her a sort of Sweden or Switzerland in 25 years." Anybody who knows "small" Colombia, the fifth largest state in Latin America, covering a land area equal to France, Spain, and Portugal combined, would blink at this. In spite of the facts, confusingly denied in an earlier section by Mr. Clark, that the Colombian development plan has considerable merit and that agrarian reform is slowly getting under way, to introduce Sweden or Switzerland as a category for comparison is to confuse rather than enlighten. While illiteracy and poverty are so widespread, while the incredible violence in the countryside continues to take its toll of over a thousand peasant lives every year and to force desertion of rich agricultural lands and swell the town slums, while most of the land is controlled by a small number of latifundistas, while the world price of coffee is so low, while five years of civil service reform has put only 3% of the civil service on a non-political career basis, while only 5% of the labour force is organised into unions—optimism for Colombia's future must be cautious, even if the political attitudes of the two ruling parties do appear at last to be more in accord with the real needs of the country.

Mr. Clark deserves credit for his plea for more attention for Latin America and for his suggestion for sending out administrators experienced in the problems of developing areas; but one cannot help hoping that enough interest will be generated in Latin America to make superfluous articles of the sort contributed by Mr. Clark.

R. T. Thomas

Bogota, Colombia

I began my "letter" by admitting that these were first impressions of a first visit, and listed the four countries I visited. But even first visitors may not be wholly wrong. Latin America does have some things in common, particularly a very powerful neighbour to the north and a very revolutionary neighbour off-shore. The reactions of the politically conscious (agreed not "most Latin-Americans") to these facts have a certain uniformity, and it is not the reaction I had been led to expect, hence my notes on Castro's standing.

The phrase about Colombia aiming at being a sort of Sweden or Switzerland after 25 years of planning came from an economic group at the University—notorious optimists—and, as I warned, "what is lacking in much of Latin America is the effective will to develop—to change the old system and break up many existing profitable arrangements. . . ."

I shall be sorry if we have to await Gallup Polls before having views about Latin America; we shall be belated and probably just as wrong.

William Clark

Overseas Development Institute, London

TWTWTW

Speaking *seriously,* Mr. Sherman [Encounter, June] is not doing a grand job at all.

He takes as definition that "the essence of satire lies in catching the audience by surprise in order to bring its members to see *themselves.*" From which he demonstrates that TWTWTW is not satire. But many people would question his definition. They would suppose the essence of satire to be attack; and what chiefly needs to be seen when an attack is mounted is the target. Sights are then laid as accurately as possible, and observers (if any) treated to a display of marksmanship. Again, Mr. Sherman holds that the business of satire is "putting over an unpopular case;" but for others satire scores highest when it is putting *down,* not over.

Nevertheless we have to thank Mr. Sherman for a string of excellent observations; for example, "the inherent dilemmas of power, the unavoidable choices between greater and lesser evils." His protest against gross sexuality is well founded; and we share his feeling that some TWTWTW thrusts are too, too, unkindly. But when he strays into angry-middleagedmanship he misses as widely as G.B.S. once did when reviewing *The Importance of Being Earnest.* Iridescent bubbles of nonsense, the art of the late Max Miller, are not for grading.

TWTWTW of course is made up of far more than foolery, "weekly butts," talented young-gentship, and cheesecake. Mr. Sherman sees it as part of a wider "decline in values." I disagree. TWTWTW's selection of targets builds into a protective fire around the values of compassion and, yes, decency. It forces some despoilers, at all events, to keep their heads down. Mr. David Frost shines through my screen as a with-it Abou Ben Adhem.

And therefore I hope that Mr. Frost (whom I do not know apart from viewing) will maintain the magnanimity I attribute to him. Let him not, in the course of his new season, find a Sherman in the Running Brooke, or anything of that sort.

W. L. Ricketts

Midhurst, Sussex

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AUTHORS

Richard Mayne took first class honours at Trinity College, Cambridge, followed by a Ph.D. for which his researches took him to Italy for a year before he returned to be Assistant Tutor at the Cambridge Institute of Education. Subsequently, he has been an official of the European Community, first in Luxembourg, then in Brussels, where he was closely concerned in the negotiations between Britain and the Common Market. In November 1962 he was asked by Jean Monnet to join his personal staff in Paris as Director of the Documentation Centre of the *Comité d'Action pour les Etats-Unis d'Europe*. He is also well-known as a critic, being a regular contributor to the literary pages of Britain's weekly and Sunday papers, and is the author of *The Community of Europe*, (published by Gollancz in 1962)....

Kingsley Amis' new novel, *One Fat Englishman*, from which we have excerpted a chapter, will shortly be published by Victor Gollancz....

Will Herberg is an American writer on theological subjects and is the author of *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Anchor Books, New York, 1955)....

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Saul Bellow is the well-known American novelist, author of *The Adventures of Augie March, Seize the Day*, and *Henderson the Rain King*. His article in this number is based on a recent lecture at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C....

H. C. Allen is Professor of History at University College, London. He is the author of the recent book, *Anglo-American Predicament* (Macmillan)....

John Gross, who read English literature at Oxford (1952–1955), is now a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. He is a well-known literary critic and has also often written on Jewish questions.

In the United States, a formidable controversy has been raging since the serialisation of the Viking Press book in the pages of *The New Yorker*. An unfortunately phrased critique in the *New York Times* by Judge Michael Musmanno (who had served on the court at Nuremberg) brought violent letters of protest from Dwight MacDonald and Robert Lowell among many others. Still, in the two New York intellectual journals most sympathetic to her work, Dr. Arendt also came in for severe criticism. Norman Podhoretz, writing in *Commentary*, sub-titled his essay "the perversity of brilliance." Lionel Abel, in *Partisan Review*, argued that her standpoint was essentially that of "a political and moral aesthete" and insisted not only on the unsoundness of her views on Eichmann in this book but on the complete invalidity of her famous theory of totalitarianism (in *The Burden of our Time*). In the *New Republic*, Dr. Bruno Bettelheim defended the Arendt theses, and in the *N.Y. Review of Books* George Lichtheim, "on balance," thought them both timely and tenable.

We hope to return to this subject next month with an exchange of letters between Hannah Arendt and Prof. Gershon Scholem (of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem).

WHO READS ENCOUNTER?

Now that ENCOUNTER is ten years old we should very much like to find out something about our readers—who they are, what they do, what they think of the magazine. We have prepared a list of questions in the form of a folder which we have inserted loose in this month's copy. We hope you will assist us by filling it in. If the folder has been mislaid, we shall be pleased to send you another if you will write to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1.

The editorial and business offices of ENCOUNTER are at 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1. A stamped addressed envelope (English stamp) or international reply coupons should accompany MSS, otherwise they cannot be returned. For subscription details please see page 1.

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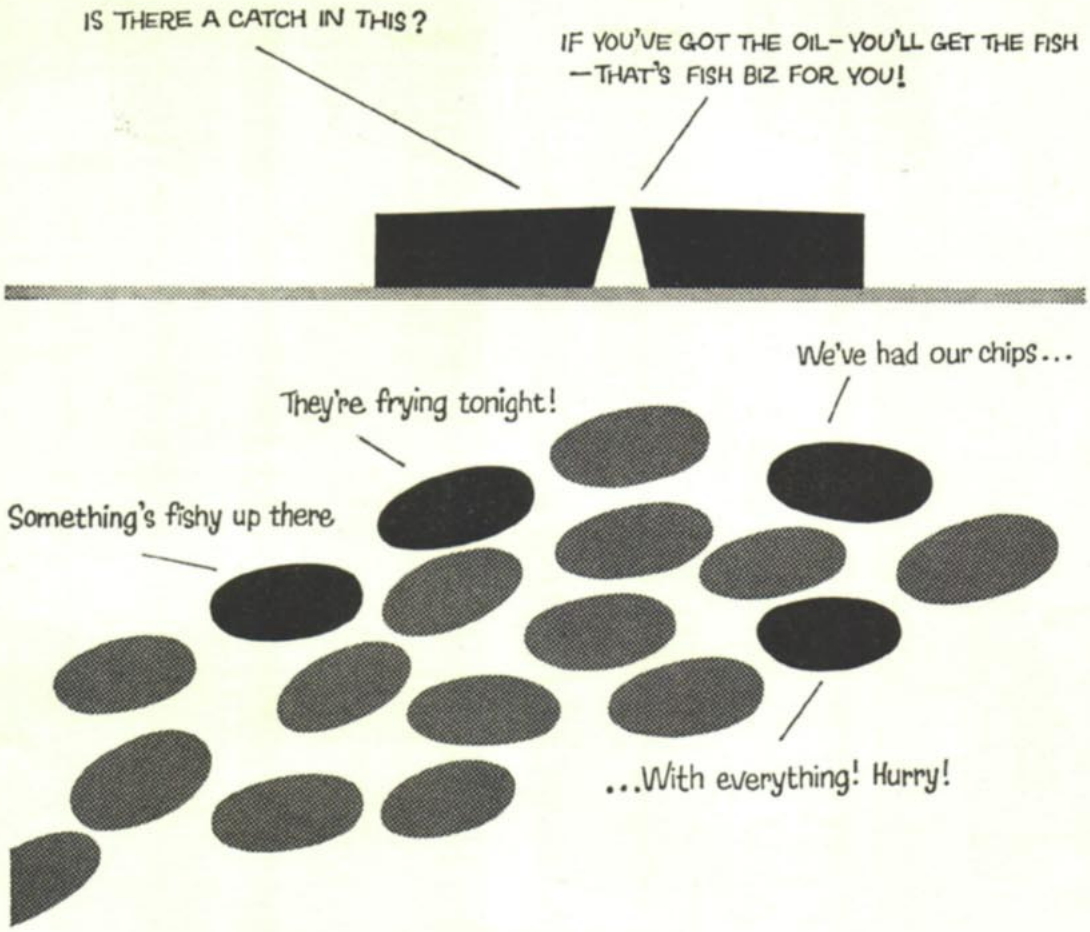
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ENCOUNTERS

an anthology from the first ten years of *Encounter* edited by Stephen Spender, Irving Kristol, and Melvin J. Lasky with an introduction by D. W. Brogan.

Here is a magnificent anthology which every reader of *Encounter* will wish to possess. To celebrate the magazine's first ten years the editors have brought together some of the most famous contributions – e.g. Nancy Mitford on the English Aristocracy, Wayland Young on Prostitution, H. R. Trevor-Roper's critique of Arnold Toynbee – many of which are unobtainable in the original

issues. The section headings themselves give some idea of the scope of this 600-page anthology: Persons & Places, Problems & Polemics, Arts & Letters, Men & Ideas, Stories, Poems. Inevitably some readers will regret the omission of their favourite contributor, but when those chosen include Mary McCarthy, Evelyn Waugh, Robert Graves, Nadine Gordimer, Cyril Connolly, C. P. Snow, Edmund Wilson, Isaiah Berlin, Lionel Trilling, Arthur Koestler, W. H. Auden, Thom Gunn, Philip Larkin and Kenneth Tynan (to mention only a few of the 52 contributors), there should be plenty to satisfy the most voracious intellectual appetite.

ENCOUNTERS will be published in mid-November by **Weidenfeld & Nicolson** in England at 42s; and in America by **Basic Books** at $8.50. It will be available only through booksellers, with whom orders should be placed.

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